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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NATIVE STUDENT SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

BY

©

DOROTHY J. MAKINEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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D J Makinen

14423-87 Street
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T5E 3G6

December 16, 1993

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NATIVE STUDENT SCHOOL EXPERIENCES submitted by Dorothy J. Makinen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

Barbara Paulson
Dr. Barbara Paulson
Supervisor

Marilyn J. Assheton-Smith
Dr. Marilyn Assheton-Smith
Committee Member

Dustin T. Shannon-Brady
Dr. Dustin T. Shannon-Brady
Committee Member

Date: Sept. 30, 1993

ABSTRACT

The factors that influence the decisions of Native students to leave, to return, and to remain in school were investigated. Subjects included five Native students between the ages of 18 and 24. Factors influencing the decision to leave school were identified as the perception of apathy from teachers, prejudice, a hostile school environment, and a lack of Native role models. The decision to return to school was influenced by a concern for the future and by having a strong support system. Factors influencing the decision to remain in school were identified as having an active support system and having specific career goals. An implication for counselling includes the importance of counsellor awareness of value orientations other than those of the dominant majority. Educators must strive to create a more positive learning environment and re-evaluate resources used to teach history and social studies. Further research should examine effects of having limited Native role models and differential student treatment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1977, I ventured forth on my first teaching assignment. The school in question, which offered kindergarten to grade eight, was run by Northland School Division and located northeast of Peace River, Alberta. The community was comprised of all Native (mostly treaty) individuals with the exception of the teachers. Negative preconceptions of Native students gained while growing up in a small Alberta town in which Natives made up a large proportion of the school population were shattered. The students in this remote community were conscientious, outgoing, and on the whole, excellent students. Contrary to my expectations, students attended school consistently and were rarely tardy. This was dramatically emphasized when on one occasion the school buses didn't run because it was too cold, -65 degrees Fahrenheit. One of the boys in my grade six class walked a mile and a half to school because he did not want to miss a day. Skipping school was never an issue.

The following year, while working for a different school board, I encountered two of my former students living within the town of Peace River. In order to complete grade nine, the girls had been forced to move into town and take up room and board with separate local families. The girls whom I remembered as being talkative, bright, and outgoing were now subdued and withdrawn. Both were failing in

school; their averages had dropped from being in the 80s and 90s to being in the 20s and 30s. Everything was foreign to them: the people they lived with, the language, the food, the customs, the school, the other students. They were miserable, determined to quit school and go back home. To encourage them to complete the school year, I invited them to move in with my family. While these two did manage to complete their year, most Native students from their community who leave home to go to school quit and move back without ever completing grade nine.

It is with distress that I have noted similar patterns of hopelessness and withdrawal in Native students within the schools in Edmonton. Although specific records of Native attendance are not kept, I have observed a pattern of Native students dropping out at some point during junior high school. Of those who do complete junior high school, only a handful seem to graduate from high school.

The apparent lack of involvement Native students have in school is a further concern. Compared to students from three Native community schools in northern Alberta with which I am familiar, the Native students in Edmonton appear to have poorer attendance and a general lack of academic achievement. In observing student relationships in Edmonton, it would appear that Native students have few friendly relationships with non-Native students that persist beyond school hours. As well, they appear to experience

only limited involvement in extracurricular activities offered within the schools. Observations suggest that there are few factors in the schools that Native children find attractive.

Need for the Research

What is to become of Native students who find themselves in a school environment that is perceived to be negative towards them? Contact with former students from my first year of teaching reveals situations of alcohol abuse and unemployment. Is there any more hope for the urban Native student? If Native students are to benefit from the education system, they must be willing participants in a system that they perceive to be accepting of them and of benefit to them, a situation not always found when students leave their community or elementary school to enter junior or senior high. In order to determine the needs of these students, it is important to understand what their perceptions are and how they view the educational system as it is now. For those students who have left or are considering leaving school, it is important to determine the factors that motivate them to return to or to remain in school. When our understanding is expanded, changes can be implemented to better suit Native student needs.

The research to date on Native education tends to focus on characteristics of Natives as a group. As a result, educators are presented with a global picture of Native

students who, because of historical and cultural factors, are expected to behave in a prescribed manner. While the collective history of Native groups in Canada has undoubtedly affected their interactions with the dominant culture, educators must look beyond group characteristics and examine the more subtle factors which affect the behavior, attitude, and performance of Native students. Rather than employing a "top down" investigation of factors assumed to influence whether or not students choose to remain in school, I have chosen an approach in which the individuals involved identify the factors which they feel have been critical in helping them to decide whether or not to continue in school.

In recent literature the participants in this study are often referred to as being Native rather than Indian, although the term Indian is occasionally used in specific studies. The subjects are Treaty Indians, Non-Treaty Indians, or Metis, and each has identified occasions in which he/she has been identified as an aboriginal. Each has referred to him/herself as being Native.

Methodological Framework

The purpose of this research has been to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomena that influence the decision by Native students on whether or not they will remain in or return to school. The intent has been to focus on young Natives who have at some point left

school but have now returned as young adults. A phenomenological framework has been utilized to investigate these experiences. By utilizing this approach, it is hoped that common themes can be identified that will better assist educators in identifying and instituting strategies seen by Natives as conducive to them remaining in school. Five Native students have shared their experiences in an attempt to explore experiences that have influenced their decisions regarding school.

The Research Question

Each of the participant's experiences has had an impact on whether or not he/she chose to remain in or return to school. In undertaking this study, the overall question was: What are the experiences faced by Native students in public schools and how do these experiences affect decisions regarding leaving, returning to, or staying in school? By focusing on this question, an attempt has been made to identify common themes in experiences shared by Native students.

Overview of Thesis

The thesis begins by presenting the background history that led to the question, an argument for following through with the research, and the methodological framework be employed. Chapter Two includes a literature review including common explanations given for Native school failure, Native views on dropping out, prejudice directed

towards Native students, differing value orientation of Natives, and suggestions which have been offered in hope of retaining Native students. Chapter Three provides the rationale for the use of phenomenological approach as a method of obtaining and analyzing the data. An overview of this method followed by an explanation of the procedures utilized follows. Chapter Four outlines the findings, including analysis of individual and common characteristics. Chapter Five presents conclusions, possible implications for education, and directions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The educational and career options available to Native students in Canada have been limited. To a great extent, this situation has been brought about by societal barriers created as a result of historical events and by the ethnocentric beliefs held first by the more powerful European settlers and now by the dominant population. The resulting costs of this situation are staggering in both economic and human terms. Wilson (1991) describes low performance rates, disproportionate numbers of dropouts, demoralization, and unrealistic aspirations of Natives as consequences of this current situation. As with others who do not complete their schooling, Natives generally experience high unemployment and receive low wages. On a societal level, the costs of supporting dropouts and the unemployable is exacerbated by the untapped human potential (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 199Ø), and by the "...perpetuation of a state of dependency for the Native American" (Giles, 1985, p. 5). Schorr (1988) notes that until recently, those in authority could arbitrarily decide that certain individuals or groups were not needing or deserving of a serious education (cited in Brendtro et al., 199Ø). Now it is apparent that the persons presently being cast aside may be counted on at a later date to support an aging population.

History of Native Education in Canada

The history of North American Indian education has been described by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1990) as one of exclusion or forced assimilation (cited in Henderson, 1991). Presently there are few high schools located on reserves and Native children from reserves, like their urban counterparts, are required to attend public high schools. The forced assimilation of Natives in Alberta and the rest of North America has not resulted in the integration anticipated by the various governments. Instead, as Wax (1971) explains, there remains what has been labeled as the "Indian Problem," a persistent reluctance of Natives to adopt the dominant cultural identity (cited in Giles, 1985).

Common Explanations for Native Failure

Campbell (1977) found that officially recorded assessments of performance and ability of Native students tend to be substantially below that of non-Native students. In addition, records indicating absenteeism and drop out rates indicate that Natives are well aware that they are not successful in school. When asked why Native students perform so poorly in comparison to other cultural groups, educators' responses include lack of motivation, shyness, laziness, habitual absenteeism, poverty, mental deficiency on the part of the student, or ineptitude on the part of the teacher. To a large extent, these responses typify

assumptions made about Natives by non-Natives who are under the assumption that Native students have the same basic value, cultural, and economic orientation as those in the dominant society. Campbell (1977) attributes the lack of success on the part of Native students to the differences in value orientation between the Native students and the non-Native school personnel. Sando (1973) emphasizes that these students have not lived their preschool years in a vacuum. They have been influenced by their cultural "aspirations, anxieties, taboos, mores, and behavior patterns" (p. 59). Sando also states that teachers are "unaware, unsensitized, and unsympathetic to a Native student whose value system is different from their own" (p. 58).

Isolation and Survival

Wilson (1991) interviewed Indian students who had been moved from a reserve elementary school into a public high school and found that the students attributed their lack of success to a perceived isolation in the school. Native students indicated that they felt isolated from the system, the teachers, and the white students, and that they drew together with other Indian students with whom they could identify. Students also indicated that they felt ill prepared for learning a different culture and lacked the support which they needed in a setting in which they experienced racial prejudice. Wilson (1991) and Wright (1991) found that the Indian students whom they questioned

did not perceive dropping out of school as failure. Instead, they viewed it as "...maintaining some commitment to Indian values and tradition" (Scott, 1986, p. 393), or in some cases, a matter of "psychological survival" (Wilson, 1991, p. 378).

Prejudice and Discouragement of Native Students

Prejudice greatly affects performance and retention of Indian students in schools. In 1969 the American Senate Subcommittee Report on Indian Education stated that underrepresentation of Indians graduates was a result in part of discouragement of college aspirations by teachers and counsellors (cited in Giles, 1985). Benjamin (1987) noted that prejudice by staff often took the form of insensitivity to cultural and linguistic qualities of the Indian students. One example of such insensitivity could include encouraging Native students to compete, a behavior which is not at all valued in many Native cultures. Trueba (1988) states that there is a process of socialization for failure which takes place for minority students. It is described as starting with institutional representatives adopting philosophies and behaviors from the dominant culture which result in degrading incidents for the minority persons. When history lessons portray those "who were directly responsible for hurting, damaging, or destroying Native American language, culture or people" (Sando, 1973, p. 61) as heroes, motivation of Native students seems

difficult to maintain. As a result of such degrading incidents, Trueba maintains minority members experience a lowering of self-esteem, begin to develop negative attitudes toward the institution, and begin to feel like victims. They then seek out other victims for support and the negative attitudes toward the institution magnify. Eventually, it becomes more and more difficult for a minority person to enter into a learning relationship or to participate at all in school.

Wilson (1991) found that Indian students reported teachers and white students treated them in a manner unlike the way white students were treated. They stated that teachers were less tolerant of absences and would answer specific questions briskly and then go on to something else. Teachers were also observed facing and conversing with white students but often faced away from Indian students for entire class periods. White students made Indian students aware that there were certain parts of the school where they were not welcome through comments made about "strange smells in the hallway" (p. 376). When Indians came to school in new clothes, white students would comment that the welfare cheques must have come in. Wilson also noted white and Indian students generally made their own segregated seating arrangements. In this unfamiliar and hostile climate where Indian students often work with little or no support, one student in Wilson's study commented "We get disqualified

before we even know what the rules of the game are" (p. 378).

Cultural Value Orientation and School Success

Kluckholm (1960) developed a theory to explain variation in cultural value orientation by asking three questions in order to determine if there were differences in Man-Nature Orientation, Time Orientation, and Relational Orientation. Giles (1985) adapted Kluckholm's (1960) theory of cultural value orientation to determine the extent to which Indian students have been assimilated into the mainstream society and how assimilation affected ability to complete high school.

It was determined that the Native American Value Orientation regarding Man-Nature Orientation is one of harmony-with-nature. This orientation is incongruous with the mainstream culture orientation that is based on mastery-over-nature in which, rather than coexisting with nature, mankind attempts to bend it to suit the will of individuals. Secondly, it was determined that the Native American Value Orientation regarding Time Orientation places greatest emphasis on the present rather than planning for the distant future. Thirdly, the Native American Value Orientation with regard to Relational Orientation dictates that the goals of the group are of utmost importance and that individuals within the group have great latitude in the roles they play in achieving group goals. Responsibility for the group is

contrary to the dominant value held in mainstream society that the accomplishment of personal goals is of greatest importance. Giles (1985) found that of the Indian students interviewed, those with value systems most like the mainstream society or those who were able to move from one set of values to the other as the situation dictated were most likely to complete high school.

Campbell (1977) also made a number of findings regarding the significance of value orientation in determining level of school success in Native students. While the schools value conformity to rules and regulations, Natives tend to value the ability to make situational choices. While schools attempt to prepare students for careers that conform to the dominant culture, Natives tend to prefer learning life skills and focusing on personal development that will bring happiness within the Native cultural framework. Schools tend to emphasize the expertise of their school personnel, but Natives are more inclined to be influenced by the personality of the personnel. Natives also tend to give their loyalty to kin and friends and to respect elders and others who have demonstrated wisdom. Schools foster loyalty to institutionalized authority and expect obedience to that authority.

Wright (1986) goes further in stating that since schools generally champion white values to the exclusion of Indian ones, it is difficult for an Indian student with

Indian values to fit in and succeed. It would appear that educators have the task of offering an education to Indian students which will assist them in achieving their own goals without compromising or abandoning their heritage and becoming what other Natives call an "Apple" - red on the outside and white on the inside.

Empowering Native Students

In order to reverse minority student failure in students who do not have a strong positive orientation, Cummins (1986) proposes that schools strive to "empower" minority students by providing them with a strong cognitive/academic and social/emotional foundation (p. 21). Specifically, proposals are made incorporating minority students' language and culture into the school program, encouraging community participation in the schools, and changing the way "at risk" students are taught.

Incorporating minority students' language and culture into the curriculum has been advocated by members of minority groups as well as by educators and researchers who have studied the issue. Benjamin (1987), Coladarci (1983), Crumb (1982), Cummins (1986), Scott (1986) and Stuart and Gokiert (199Ø) conclude that Native students would benefit from having their culture reflected and reinforced in the curriculum. This finding was mirrored in the Alberta Department of Education's report Native Education in Alberta Schools (1985). Validation of Native culture would also

help to foster the spirit of belonging which has been absent for many Indian students in public schools (Brentro et al., 1990).

Encouraging community participation in the schools has also been identified as a means of empowering minority students and the minority community itself. In the Alberta Department of Education study on Native Education in Alberta Schools (1985), Native parents expressed the concern that they were not involved in their children's education. They referred to the school as a foreign territory where they are not welcome and where they have little opportunity to influence educational decisions regarding their children. Cummins (1986) states that when minority parents are excluded from involvement in the education of their children by educators who feel that they, as experts, know what is best for the children, the parents remain in a position of powerlessness and their lower status is reinforced. Then, when the children experience failure, those same parents are blamed for not taking an active part in education their children. Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison (1982) found that if, on the other hand, parents are invited to participate in making decisions regarding their children's education, there have been pronounced effects on the students' success in school (cited in Cummins, 1986).

Frequently students who are designated "at risk" are placed in special classes and given intensive instruction as

a means of shoring up any deficiencies. Several investigators have suggested that this type of approach confines the students in a passive learning role and can possibly lead to a form of "learned helplessness" (Beers & Beers, 1980; Coles, 1978; Cummins, 1984). Students in such a situation may find that their learning is so programmed and controlled that they are unable to assume any control over it and are unable to examine information in any but the prescribed manner. Cummins suggests that by giving students the opportunity to have some control over choosing educational goals and the opportunity to work in collaboration with each other, they will become empowered and will gain the intrinsic motivation necessary for success.

Availability of Counselling

Availability of counselling has been identified consistently as having positive impact on Native students (Aitken, 1983; Crumb, 1982; Henderson, 1991; Jeanotte, 1982; Lee, 1983; Trueba, 1988; & Wright, 1991). Wilson (1991) argues native students making a transition into a new school or into college often feel isolated, unprepared for learning in an unfamiliar culture and dealing with prejudice, and without support. In addition, Wilson reports that they will turn to each other for support and will skip school if they think that a friend needs that support. Trueba (1988) states that the most crucial mechanism in bringing about

achievement motivation and self-confidence in minority students is the establishment of dyadic relationships with teachers and counsellors, however psychological and emotional support for Native students from adults often is lacking.

Students also expressed a need for adult guidance and support in other areas. Crumb (1982) states that native high school students express a strong desire for adult counselling to provide new student orientation, information about courses and career planning, and to explain rules, procedures, and policies to both students and parents. Native students aspiring to go on to college, however, often receive inadequate or discouraging counselling. Aitken & Falk (1983) report that 80% of Native students entering college indicated that they did not receive adequate vocational or career counselling while in high school; the Senate Subcommittee Report on Indian Education (1969) attributed underrepresentation of graduating Natives in part to teacher and counsellor discouragement of college aspirations. Lee (1983) states that career counselling should be made constantly available to students beginning no later than Grade 9.

Native Role Models and Mentors

A human resource that has been identified in promoting native student success is the availability of Native role models or mentors (Chavez & Maestas-Flores, 1991; Benjamin,

1987; Aitken & Falk, 1983; and Wright, 1991). A key component of the ENLACE Community Mentorship Program in San Jose, California, is the opportunity for Hispanic students to see Hispanic role models, to share in their personal, educational, and professional life, and to discover what qualities that person has which have enabled him to succeed (Chavez & Maestas-Flores, 1991). Benjamin (1987) has identified that Navajo students who learn from Navajo teachers appear to be more highly motivated. Bernard F. Teba, Executive Director of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, testified to the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force that the lack of role models in native communities and in higher education institutions acts as a deterrent for young natives examining such careers (cited in Wright, 1991). Young Natives simply do not see first hand the benefits of a college education. When the lack of native role models is combined with the distrust that many parents feel as the result of their own educational history, the effect is one of limiting the goals and expectations of Natives.

Student Involvement

Two final and related factors identified in the literature as promoting Native student success are whether the students feel a sense of belonging and whether they are involved in activities within the school. Students who perceived that teachers did not care about them and were not

interested in providing sufficient assistance to them listed that as a salient factor in their decision to drop out (Coladarci, 1983; Wilson, 1991). Cultural alienation was identified by Aitken and Falk (1983) and by Wright (1991) as a component associated with poor academic performance by Native students. Brendtro et al., (199Ø) however, have identified a strong sense of belonging as having positive impact on native students by making them more receptive to advice given by concerned adults. Research indicates that involvement in school and campus organizations results in a greater likelihood that students will complete a program (Jeanotte, 1982; and Rooney, 1985).

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

A recurring theme throughout the literature is that the majority or mainstream culture maintains a strong bias against Natives in the educational system. Non-Native teachers generally assume that all students start with the same skills, values, and attitudes as students from the dominant majority. When minority students fail at school tasks, these teachers conclude that the students have chosen not to be successful or that these students have limited intellectual ability. Reasons given why these children are not successful tend to reflect the majority culture's lack of understanding of Indian cultures (Sando, 1973).

Studies indicate that Native students who are "cultural Indians" have very limited success in schools, but others

who can adapt their value system to fit both mainstream and Native cultures can be quite successful and comfortable (Wilson, 1991).

Prejudice in schools can take the form of educational policies and attitudes as well as specific interactions. Native students may find themselves in situations in which they are unable to experience success. In such situations, a lowering of self-esteem may result and negative attitudes develop making learning relationships difficult to form. Coupled with specific negative or exclusionary behavior on the part of teachers and white students, Native students may react by distancing themselves.

Native cultures have a different set of values and experiences than does the mainstream culture. Their approach toward school and their idea of the purpose of school differs from that of the dominant culture. In our education system, Native students are constantly asked to behave in a manner which goes against their cultural orientation.

Several factors have been identified as having a positive impact on Native student success. The availability of psychological and career counselling to students was mentioned in virtually all reports. Native role models and mentors has also been identified as having positive impact. A third factor is active participation in student activities

and a subsequent feeling of belonging on the part of Native students.

The examination of literature on this topic revealed a striking lack of data on psychological factors affecting Native students. This is disturbing in that the psychological components that are brought by Native students to school are crucial to understanding how they function and whether they feel supported in their attempts to remain in school.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study describes events experienced by five young adult Natives that influenced first their decision to reject and later to return to school. These young adults also named specific factors that they attribute to their remaining in school once they had returned. The individuals interviewed come from different communities and backgrounds, yet share the common thread of Native ancestry. The purpose of this study is to identify themes indicating how Native students determine whether or not to leave, return to, or remain in school emerging from the data based on their experiences.

Appropriateness of a Phenomenological Approach

In choosing the appropriate methodology for doing research, the nature of the problem should first be examined (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this case, the identification of factors that influence individual Native students in their decisions to quit, return to, or remain in school can be best determined by analysis of each person's experiences with that phenomenon. As Colaizzi (1978) states, "Our experience is not inside us but instead our experience is always of how we behave towards the world and act toward others" (p. 52). As such, it is through analysis of specific incidents that a pattern of experience and resulting behavior can be identified. A quantitative method would not be suitable for this task in that it would by definition

deny experience or transform it into operationally defined behavior. A qualitative method, specifically the descriptive Phenomenological approach, is better suited in that it is one that, "remains with human experience as it is experienced, one which tries to sustain contact with experience as it is given" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 53).

The Research Design

The design of this study was based on a method of descriptive phenomenology delineated by Colaizzi (1978). The premise of this method is that psychological phenomena cannot be defined or even identified through traditional psychological methods, but must be identified by first encountering that phenomenon as people experience it. The thematic analysis of data undertaken was influenced by the techniques suggested by Colaizzi (1990) and Chenitz (1986).

Rather than seeking to identify causal explanations for behavior, the descriptive phenomenological approach seeks to identify and find meaning in common experiences. Information is gathered through interviews with persons involved in such experiences. These experiences are real, have meaning for the individuals concerned, and ultimately influence further interaction with their environment. By identifying commonalties and finding meaning in experiences, understanding of these phenomena and resulting behavior can result.

Data Collection

Each participant was given an hour long semi-structured interview. Before contact was made, however, I had to examine my personal presuppositions about the research. Beliefs, attitudes, and intuitions I had adopted about Native students and their school success had to be critically scrutinized and brought forward so that an awareness of any biases held that could influence my interaction with the participants or subsequent data analysis would be made apparent.

Interviews were held at the Alberta Vocational Centre in Edmonton and were approximately one hour in length. Before each interview I gave a verbal and written explanation outlining my interest and role in the study, the purpose of the study, and the procedure to be followed. I explained that the interviews would be audiotaped and transcribed word for word, that only I and my supervisor would have access to those audio-tapes and transcripts, and that the recordings and transcripts would be destroyed upon completion of the study. I then asked for and received written consent from each participant to conduct the interview as indicated and to use the information gathered in my research paper. To increase the comfort level of each participant, I also allowed each participant to read over the interview guide before starting.

During each session, the interview guide was followed to the extent that all of the same questions were asked, but often the participants directed large amounts of the discussion through their choice of material discussed. As well, a constant comparative data analysis was utilized. When participants provided additional or related information, the new and meaningful concepts were noted and incorporated into interview questions for subsequent participants.

After each session, I wrote field notes indicating impressions which I had gathered as well as possible themes. Some of these impressions were later incorporated into questions for further interviews.

The Participants

The five participants in this study were students enrolled in the pre-UCEP (pre-University or College Entrance Program) program at the Alberta Vocational College. Individual students were approached by their program coordinator and asked to participate. Their ages range from approximately 18 to 24 years. This age group was chosen because it was felt by the researcher that the participants would be old enough to examine their school history without being still emotionally biased toward any aspects, but young enough that incidents that took place while they were going to school would still be relatively fresh in their memory.

Of the five participants, one male and one female have children; none are presently married. One male and female were born in rural Alberta, one male and female in rural Saskatchewan. The remaining male was born in Edmonton. One participant has lived on a reserve. Each participant has a history of leaving school and later returning.

Researcher's Perspective

As a white person growing up in a small Alberta community and going to a Roman Catholic school with a large Native population, I developed many negative stereotypes concerning Natives. They were generally sized up by their performance on tasks related to the lifestyle of the dominant majority. Although these perceptions were altered drastically during my first year teaching, sometimes while conducting this study I caught myself sliding back into old patterns of thinking. The insidious nature of these stereotypes was made very apparent when I found one of the participants, a Metis, making negative comments about Native students in the same program as she was in. It would appear that the factors that impinge on Native students as they make school related decisions are more subtle and complex than I had previously thought.

Data Analysis

After each interview, I recorded field notes including comments regarding the atmosphere in the interview, strong ideas and opinions that had been expressed, and new ideas

that I thought might be important to include in subsequent interviews. I then transcribed each interview word for word and read each of these protocols over in order to get a feeling for the message each participant was trying to convey. My next step was to go back to each protocol and extract phrases or sentences which I felt related directly to the topic under investigation; these statements were then numbered, transcribed, and paraphrased in order to draw out the meaning or intent I had interpreted. Certain clusters of themes started to form in my mind as I continued to paraphrase these statements.

Classification began with making a list of the clusters or categories I had identified when paraphrasing statements. I began to compile a large chart. Along the left side I labeled Participant One through Five. As I read through the significant statements given by Participant One, I moved across the page, adding new categories as they were identified by statements. Under the name of each category, I noted the number of the particular statement(s) given by Participant One relating to it. This process continued with the four remaining participants. New categories were added as they became apparent. I was left with a large chart indicating categories and their representation by each of the participants.

Next I had to refine my categories in order to eliminate redundancy and to make them more coherent. Some

categories were combined and others were reworded based on my observations and field notes. I then went back to the original protocols in order to find out if there were any themes which had not been identified by the clusters already named and to ensure that the clusters so far named were truly representative of what was stated in the protocols. Discrepancies between cluster representation were examined and field notes were referred to again in order to determine possible explanations. Further refinement of category classification was made at this time.

The results of the analysis to this point were then summarized for each participant in Appendices D through H. For each cluster that was strongly represented by all participants, an integrative description of results was developed (Appendix I). Finally, I attempted to formulate a description accurately representative of the participants' experiences that identified the factors that discouraged or encouraged them to be in school.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Each of the participants shared background information and experiences that have shaped their perceptions of what it is like to be a Native student in a public school. After extracting and paraphrasing statements made by each participant, all statements were compared for identification of common themes. The themes provided here were identified as being relevant to all of the participants and are meant to reflect the meaning behind the original statements. An examination of these themes and their impact on the participants will be followed by a general discussion of school atmosphere and its effect on Native students remaining in or dropping out of school.

Native Identification

Through their taped conversations, all participants clearly identified themselves as being Native. They referred to themselves specifically as being Native or Indian, or included themselves in a Native group.

Native identification was reflected differently by the different participants. Participant One commented frequently that he had nothing against white people, yet consistently stated that if he needed help with a school or personal problem, he would seek out a Native counsellor. This would appear to indicate that he saw himself as separate from the mainstream culture and felt more

comfortable in dealing with more personal matters with another Native person.

Participant Two clearly felt different from her white classmates. Without her Native friends, "it would have been really hard because I would have felt like I was totally, I wouldn't have felt like I could fit in, like be as good as them and stuff."

The third participant, a male, had grown up with a non-Native step-father, and stated that he had not considered himself Native. He stated that he did not have any trouble getting along with non-Native students until approximately grade four. At that time he began to get called names like "Wagon burner" and "Squaw Chief." He did not know what those names meant so he used to retaliate for the name calling by fighting.

The identity of the fourth and fifth participants could almost be defined by their exclusion from the mainstream group at school. While both had other students with whom they associated, they indicated that there were few other Native students and that the relationships they had were not close or supportive. As with Participant Three, Participant Four, also a male, got into frequent fights. He explained the reason behind these fights as follows: "Just out of any reason. Just, when you were at school, there was mostly jocks hanging out with the jocks, and, like just, just to build your self-esteem up and their egos. That's the main

reason why we just fought." With a very small Native student population in his school, Participant Four indicated that whenever possible he stayed in class or did work in the library. Participant Five stated that at her last high school, "I started realizing, like, what was around me, there was a lot of prejudice and I didn't like how they segregated everybody into different groups. Like what I was saying, all the Blacks here, and all the Natives here, and whatever different three or four of them. And then the Orientals and however else they had it."

All of the participants in this study stressed the need to teach young Native students about their culture. They recommended bringing in Native elders to teach young Native students about culture and how to adapt their lives so that their culture need not be compromised by a desire to do well in the dominant culture.

Unstable Family Dynamics

Four of the five participants stated that they had experienced some sort of unstable family dynamics; the other stated that in her opinion unstable family dynamics has a major negative effect on Native school success. Situations such as change in primary care giver, alcoholism of parents or care-giver, and frequent moves to different schools and communities were described. While the moves in themselves may not have been brought about as a result of family breakdown, according to the statements given, they had a

negative impact on the students' performance in that students were uprooted and had to adjust to new surroundings.

Participants indicated that factors related to family stability have a negative impact on schooling. One participant stated how he had grown up in a small town in Saskatchewan, and as the result of his parents' divorce, had lived with his father, aunt, and grandmother. When he was in junior high school, the family got back together and moved to a larger center. He describes the move as "a mistake." He stated that had he stayed in a smaller community, "Then I wouldn't have gotten into trouble or anything like that. Skipping out, maybe I'd have learned more."

Participant Two also had a history of many moves. She described a situation in which she and her siblings would be passed from parents to grandmother and would switch communities and schools frequently. "It was the times that my mom and them would take us and my grandma would get mad at us so she'd drop us off at my mom's and she knew I hated it, but she'd do it anyway. My mom used to drink a lot and my dad. They used to always drink so finally I just, I don't know, we just started, all of us kids." When asked why many Native students do not want to remain in school, another participant replied, "For all the people that I know, almost, it's because of their family at home. Like,

the trouble they have at home and stuff. 'Cause I know that a lot of them want to finish school, but their home life brings its down, so they say, 'Just forget it.'" Commenting on factors that affect Native student performance, one participant ventured to state that an unstable home life may be one of the most influential factors affecting whether or not a Native student succeeds in school.

Negative Relationship - peers

All participants indicated that they had experienced peer relationships that had hindered their ability to do well in school. In this study, the term "negative peer relationships" includes peer pressure from friends to engage in behavior detrimental to school success and relationships with other, non-Native, students that undermined Native student self-concept and/or impacted negatively on their ability to learn.

Participant Three found that he turned to his friends for backing in fights when he was made fun of for being Native by other students at school. He had found that talking about it with his mother upset her and talking to the school administration was ineffective. "Well, I learned how to deal with it, like, either I could talk my way out of it, or I could, if I couldn't beat the guy, I'd get somebody to kick his ass. But otherwise, I general all the time too, I just ignored them."

Some participants stated that as they became older, alcohol and/or drugs became more important in their lives. In trying to join a popular group, Participant Three said that he got into drugs, booze, and partying to be one of the "in" people and meet the girls. Participant One said that his friends convinced him that life would be easier if he quit school. He was told, "There's jobs out there to go work. Why stick in that school? Go work. Get money. Go party. Get drugs. Buy a car." Participant Five stated that sometimes friends and family suggested that schoolwork be postponed. "Oh, well, you can always do this some other time," or, "Let's skip today, and let's go here, and let's go do this."

Relationships with non-Native students were not always positive either. Each of the participants seemed to be quite aware that they were not a part of the mainstream society. In the earlier grades, the distinction seemed to be made primarily on the basis of wealth or lack of it. Participant Two told of how she felt very intimidated by other students and stayed close to other Natives in school. "Like, it would have been everything, like, my clothing and my lunch, like, it would have been everything. My homework. It would have been everything that I though about. Just a sandwich we'd have and that would be it." By the time the participants reached high school, all of them had fallen into their own niche: Natives here, Orientals there, Blacks

there. Slowly they had become more and more isolated from the mainstream culture.

Fights at school often seemed to be establishing a pecking order. Participant Four described what it was like for him:

> "Threatened. It was hard because at school, sometimes, it was hard because being Native, it's like, OK, you've got the fat kids being picked on in school. Everybody needs to feel better than somebody else in school, so they always look for the weakest ones, the weakest people. It's either the geeks, the fat people, or, you know, whoever."

The same student also commented that he felt the hardest time to be a Native student in school was between seven and ten years of age. He stated,

> "Around there everybody is looking for their own little niche to fall into. I think by the time they find their own little niche to fall into they find their own little groups to hang around. Between then they're always looking around, they're always curious. That's where it gets tough."

Non-Native students could be cruel with their remarks towards Native students. Participant Three stated how once, during a social studies class on the topic of North American Indians, he made a comment about the material being discussed by the teacher. Although it was a long time ago,

he remembers the other students laughing and making jokes about it. He remembers them saying, "You should know about that," and "Ask your mom." After that, in order to fit in, he just kept his mouth shut. The same young man told of a Native schoolmate of his in high school. His friend, a Native dancer, would dress in multicolored shirts with ribbons and bring sweet grass and feathers to school. This friend was ridiculed to the extent that he too eventually became more private with his behavior.

Negative Relationships - teachers

Discrimination in school was not limited to student behavior. The Native students in this study all described situations in which they felt they had been discriminated against by non-Native teachers. Teacher discrimination included behavior ranging from ignoring Native students to disregarding their educational needs, to open and hostile verbal attacks.

One type of discrimination experienced by all participants without exception took place in the classroom when Native students had their hands raised to answer questions. Each participant told of examples in which the classroom teacher would not choose or even acknowledge Native students. Participant Two related how Native students had their questions answered last: "And they just seemed to help the white people more. That's how it was going to school. And they'd help us if there was time left

over or else if they liked you or something. And they just seemed to help the white people more." This sentiment was echoed by the other participants. Native students also appeared to be placed against a different standard than the non-Native students. Participant Four described how, unlike non-Native students, "If I never handed in an assignment, I just got a zero and that was it. The teacher asked for it once, and if you don't hand it in, the next day you have a zero. They never went any farther with it." It would almost appear that in some cases Native students were expected to fail and, therefore, it was not worthwhile expending teacher energy on them.

The participants also indicated that their needs were not always met by their teachers or the programs. Participant One was interested in learning a particular trade in which he needed to know math, but he did not feel that he ever got the help he needed. When thinking back to his math teacher, he recalled, "He never had time to show me nothing. So it kept up for a while so I just dropped out." Programs were also often thought by the Native students to be unsatisfactory. Participants One and Two found themselves in "special" programs in junior high or high school; one left after two weeks because "it seemed like we were just learning baby stuff - real low grades."

Sometimes an incident occurred at school in which a group of Native students was in conflict with a non-Native

group. The Native participants indicated that often teachers seemed to believe a non-Native before a Native student. This was said to cause additional racial stress, particularly in the high schools. As well, participants stated that they often did not feel that they were being taken seriously when they brought up an issue with a teacher. After trying repeatedly to talk to a counsellor about a dispute at his school, Participants Four got involved in a fist-fight with some other students. His frustration increased when the result of this altercation was a suspension from school. He stated that as far as he was concerned, the suspension and a threat of further suspensions gave him no choice but to leave school.

While all of the participants were able to give examples of teachers ignoring Native students or, at the very least, not pushing them to excel, some were able to give examples of blatant prejudicial behavior. They told of teachers who would, "single you out and make you look stupid so when you feel stupid you don't ask questions." Participant One told of how his math teacher would always embarrass him in from of the class. Eventually he quit the mathematics class then quit school. Participant Two told of how, "A couple of teachers were really mean and that. They'd just come and knock us in the head with a book or something, 'Are you paying attention?'" Participant Three

told of an incident that occurred between her and her high school principal:

> He'd put people down. I would fight with him on a day to day basis. Like, I always had problems with my foot. One one side I had a bad toe. I'd always have, like, ingrown toenails and stuff, and he'd say, "Oh, well, you have to show me what's going on. What's doing this. Why aren't you in school for this and that?" And he just never believed me. He always said, "Indians are always lying, and all this. And he just thought that I came from a bad home and I didn't believe in that so I just went fine. And I left. And that was it."

The participants in the study also stated that they had at times been made to feel uncomfortable by comments which they overheard teachers make. Participant Three described hearing overhearing conversations among teachers:

> They'd be in the staff room and you'd hear them talking about kids. And it wasn't just because the kid was Native, it was because of what they thought of the kid or they'd make even comments about the kid. They'd say things they shouldn't have. It was none of their business to discuss. "So and So's mother is probably a, you know, she probably drinks or something." Or something about the way the kid's dressed. The way

they dress their kids, the way they groom their kids. The person must be drunk. There's stuff like that.

Positive Relationship - peers

Positive relationships with peers as defined in this study include all peer relationships that helped influence the Native student to return to or remain in school. Characteristics of these relationships include a feeling of support and encouragement, as well as a feeling that as Native students they were not being judged as inferior to students in the dominant culture.

Although the participants in this study indicated that they had a number of problems to overcome at school, they also indicated that having a supportive peer group really helped them cope with school problems in the past and continues to do so today. When the students were in elementary or junior high school, it appeared that the peer group acted as a buffer to the outside world. When they felt that their clothing, or lunch, or homework was not as good as that of the non-Native students, they could still feel comfortable with the other Native children in their class.

The participants also reported that as children, they used to discuss their problems with their peers rather than with their parents. "We used to get really, nobody ever run home and told the family, told their parents about it. We just always talked amongst ourselves." Rather than "bring

everybody into it" and become the focus of more attention at school, they would "talk to each other, and that would be good enough." When asked how important friends were, the common response was, "Really important."

The female participants appeared to have a stronger peer support network growing up than did the males. While the males tended to band together in case of a fight, the females seemed to offer more verbal support. Even so, Participant Three, a male, did comment that he had a number of girl friends with whom he enjoyed discussing matters without fear of keeping up a macho image.

The support offered by friends also was influential in determining whether the participants returned to school. In the case of one of the participants, he went with his girlfriend to check out a program and ended up registering for it himself. One of the other males was convinced by a co-worker who was dying of cancer to go back to school. His friend convinced him that he should no longer work in an industry that was dangerous. Both of the female participants stated that they had plenty of encouragement from their friends to enter and stay with the program. One tells of how her friends constantly phone her from Saskatchewan to tell her how proud they are of her.

All the participants were enrolled in the pre-UCEP (pre-University or College Entrance Program) at Alberta Vocational College when this study was completed. All

expressed satisfaction at the amount of support available to them from other students. As Participant Four stated:

> When I first started out I was really nervous about it and now, after the time that we've been here, it's getting easier. Like, we all know each other. It's really easy to talk to people rather than having to go see the counsellor and make an appointment three weeks in advance when you're having problems that day. Here, if we have a problem, we talk to any one of the staff members about it and they'll help us the best they can. If not, we just talk to our friends about it. We just, someone's around to help us.

When asked if having more Native students in their classes made things less stressful for themselves as Native students, I received a mixed reaction. Some of the participants indicated that with a larger number of Native students in the classroom, they would feel able to associate with other people and "learn more freely." As well, they indicated that they could joke about things that they felt only Native people would understand, things like bannock and rabbit stew. They also indicated that they would be able to talk more freely about traditional values and not worry about being laughed at or judged. Others, however, worried about segregation. While they stated how much they valued the support an all-Native program provided, they seemed

concerned that an all-Native program might eventually lead to a watering down of the curriculum.

Positive Relationship - teachers

This category includes positive relationships with all school personnel but particularly with teachers. Positive relationships were identified as those in which the teacher or staff member recognized the Native student as an equal member of the class and treated him/her as such. Participants noted examples of incidents in which they felt that their teacher had cared for them and was looking out for their best interests.

When discussing former teachers, the participants in this study all focused on interactions and relationships held with these individuals rather than teacher expertise or subject matter. Just as a strong peer support group served to assist Native students in coping with school problems, so did the support of individual teachers. Participant Three explained why one of his grade twelve teachers was special:

> To stay in school, high school, to stick it out for my final year was my psychology teacher. He made going to school really bearable. That's where I got my best marks, in sociology and psychology because he was such a good teacher. Like, he taught well, but he also, you could sit there and argue with the guy. You could sit there and give different view points. You could argue a paper and say, "Well, I think this is

> silly, I shouldn't have got this," and he'll say, "Well, why?" and if you sat there and argued and gave a good reason, he could up your mark. His school was more enjoyable to go to, his classroom.

Other participants named other teachers whom they felt had made a difference in their education. Qualities that were admired in teachers were the willingness to support them, taking a specific interest in student work, and availability to discuss student concerns. Often the teachers remembered had gone out of their way to help get students enrolled in special programs or had assisted them when they were having personal or financial difficulty. Participant Two recalled that while at first she was not impressed with her English teacher, she soon came to appreciate how much she had learned and how positive the criticisms of her work had been. Now she states that English is her favorite subject. Participant One explained how one of his former teachers really helped him get over the death of his grandfather. Sometimes staff members were remembered just for being there when needed.

Teaching and counselling staff are not the only staff members who have an impact on students. The students at A.V.C. were quick to point out that the entire staff is supportive. They feel that the staff takes the time to notice and greet each student and even make small talk with them. One participant stated that at first she was quite

surprised when the secretarial and teaching staff would join with the students in the cafeteria at noon. In her words, "They teach us, but still they're our friends." When asked if she would talk to any of them about a personal problem, she stated, "Yeah, I talked to them all. Actually, the secretary's really good. She's always there to talk to you, and I talk to her when I need somebody to talk to."

Lack of Native Role Models

All participants lamented the lack of Native role models for Native students. They indicated that it has been difficult for them to aspire to many careers and occupations because they have little or no experience upon which to base expectations.

Throughout the interviews, the participants often recommended that Native counsellors and teachers be hired whenever possible to work with Native students. The reasoning behind such hiring was twofold. Firstly, the participants indicated that a Native student would be more likely to open up to another Native person who might have a better understanding of what, as a Native, he/she is going through. Secondly, it was explained that by having Native teachers and counsellors, Native students could see these people around them and think, "Well, I could do that, too. Like, I see this person at this job. I don't have to settle for anything less."

A common concern expressed by the young Natives in this study was dealing with their new position on the threshold of an unfamiliar career. Many Natives have come from backgrounds in which they do not have any family members or friends in occupations which required an extensive education. As the participants in this study indicated, being in this position of not knowing what to expect can be very stressful. Participant Three explained how he and others he know tend to "self-destruct" just prior to reaching an educational goal. In fact, two of the members in this study quit school within weeks of graduating grade twelve. Both stated how the pressure to succeed was more than they could handle.

Access to a broad spectrum of Native role models was seen by the participants as a great motivator:

> I think, to be honest, it would make everything a little bit more realistic where you could say, "It's achievable." You'd see and say, "You've done it, I can do it. She's done it, I can do it." And you're afraid to be a pioneer and you don't see anyone else in that field you can talk to, you can talk to people. You're saying, "Well, Jeez." You worry about small little things. "How am I going to be able to, you know, fit into this field, or how am I going to be able to fit in this area?" But if you see somebody already there, well then it's a little bit easier.

Family Support

All of the participants indicated that their family had supported them in the decision to return to or remain in school. The type and amount of support seemed to vary, however, according to the familiarity with the educational system held by individual families. Family support appeared to be greatest in families that had members who were currently in high school or community colleges and in families that had relatives already in professions requiring formal training.

Participant Three told of how his mother had been very positive in helping him to recognize the importance of schooling and in defining his goals. He recalled how she would talk to him about those goals in order to reinforce his beliefs. "She'll ask me questions about what I want to do and how I want to do it, and then she'll say, 'Well, what would you have to do to this, to accomplish it?'" He went on to say that this process made him focus on things he needed to do to achieve his goals.

Participant Four was greatly influenced by his uncle and younger brother, both of whom are still in school themselves. He recalled growing up and seeing his uncle always doing homework and working towards achieving his goals. Now he finds that they are able to assist each other with schoolwork. This encourages him to continue. He is also encouraged by his younger brother, a good student who

is able to have a part time job and still be successful in school.

Other participants told of encouragement they received from immediate and extended family members. Participants Two recalled how lonely it was when she first moved to Edmonton from Saskatchewan with her two children.

> "They, always just, like they're really good for me and, like, they listen. Even them, they encourage me all the time. 'Oh, you walk to school so early and it's so far.' Anything. They always say good things and that. And they, when we first came her, we had no furniture for a long time and they never complained about nothing like not having any money."

This same participant stated how her family and friends constantly phone or come to visit her. "They're always saying, 'You can do so many things,' and they're always encouraging me all the time and they're always doing different things to make me feel really good about myself."

Even support from family members who had little formal education themselves appears to have greatly influenced the participants. Participant Three told of the encouragement given by his stepfather who tells him how tough it is for him with only a grade four education. The stepfather constantly urges him not to "make the same mistake" he did by dropping out of school.

Participant Five came from a family in which having at least a grade twelve education was the norm. She stated how all of her brothers and sisters were in community college or finishing off high school and that "because of all of us being in school from, like, being at home, we all pretty much help each other. There's no compromise, it's everybody helps everybody, kind of thing." She indicated that when she quit school in grade ten, she was pushed by her mother to go to work rather than to do nothing. Now that she has decided that she needs a challenge, her family is strongly behind her move to go back to school.

Future Planning

Each participant in this study has indicated that the decision to remain in school has been made with some future goal in mind. While some goals are very specific, such getting into a particular program at N.A.I.T., others are less so. All have indicated that they see an education as an avenue for them in attaining a better lifestyle for themselves and their families.

Some came to this realization as they became older and became burdened with more responsibilities, others were faced with it as a result of a particular set of life circumstances. As was mentioned earlier, one male came to recognize the limitations and hazards of his job through the death of a co-worker. Another was made more aware of his current job limitations after experiencing a back injury.

He realized that he could not continue working at the same labour occupation indefinitely. The third male participant came to the realization that without an education he had no future after being incarcerated for six months. During his time in jail, he realized that he wanted to earn more than subsistence wages.

Both women in the study appear to have career goals in mind that will bring them satisfaction as well as security. As well, they seem conscious of social restrictions placed upon uneducated Native individuals. One clearly stated that she did not want her children growing up being satisfied being on welfare.

THE DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Common experiences have influenced the decision made by each of the participants in this study to leave school. These experiences include experiencing prejudice and stereotyping by school staff members and students and experiencing a general feeling of unfamiliarity and incompetence in an unfamiliar setting.

The relationship which the students had with school personnel and other students had a dramatic impact on the decision to quit school. In situations in which the participants felt that the school staff was apathetic or had made negative judgements about them, dropping out appeared inevitable. As Participant One commented, "He never had time to show me nothing. So it kept up for a while so I

just dropped out." The same sentiment was echoed by Participant Four who stated, "Sometimes they just want to give up because they find either the staff, the teachers can't take the time to explain to them exactly what to do." It was also indicated that teachers sometimes ignored minority students, "because they'd be asking questions, you'd raise your hand to answer them, sometimes they wouldn't even look your way." Negative actions taken by teachers also served to alienate Native students. "They'd rather single you out and make you look stupid so when you feel stupid you don't ask questions. My math is one of the reasons why I quit school. I think it also had to do with my self-image because my math teacher was always embarrassing me in front of the class. So I just quit math, quit school."

Some participants felt that their teachers were apathetic to their concerns. "I was arguing with them because I was getting in a lot of trouble and all that and I had asked them many times to talk to the students about it and they weren't doing anything about it so I took it into my own hands and we got into a big scrap and after that my teachers got on my case about it and said 'If it happens again, we're going to expel you.'" Eventually this student decided that quitting school was one way of solving his problem.

Experiencing prejudicial treatment from staff and white students also influenced the decision of the participants to quit school. "They just seemed to help the white people more. And they'd help us if there was time left over or else if they liked you or something. We'd all have our hands up, like a lot, everybody in the class and they'd always go to, like all the farmer kids, like, all the white farmer kids and that, and stuff, and they'd help them first. We'd always come last." Participant Three described how "most people are still stereotyped that Natives are alcoholics and druggies and all that. And that's the way that teachers and other people that were, are, in the school district are now."

In several instances participants seemed almost to justify negative treatment towards them by students or staff. Participant Three implied that other students were just trying to build up their egos or establish a pecking order in the school. Participant One suggested that abuse by teachers was likely brought on by his poor attitude. He indicated that teachers perhaps would not help him because he would skip school. Some just felt that teachers were too busy to bother with them.

A hostile or threatening school environment, along with the delegation to second class status was also noted as reasons for quitting school. Participants gave examples of times in which they felt physically threatened, verbally

abused, or awarded a lower status than the white class members. Participants Three and Four cited examples of situations in which they were constantly provoked to fight at school. Despite the fact that the administration in each case was made aware of the circumstances, Participant Three eventually earned the dubious title of record holder for getting the strap in his grade. His reason for fighting was constant harassment by white students who called him "wagon burner," "squaw chaser," and other derogatory names. The other male, as previously mentioned, quit when he could not get the teachers to take any action.

Participant Two stated that without other Native students to chum around with, her life at school would have been unbearable. She would have constantly been worrying that other students were judging her in terms of clothing, lunch, or work. Participants gave examples of how, in an effort not to draw negative attention to themselves, they would deliberately avoid discussing their Native heritage and remain silent when issues regarding Natives were brought up in class.

Another issue identified was the feeling of discomfort experienced by the participants when they realized that they were entering into educational situations in which they had no reference points. All of the participants indicated that it would be of benefit to Native students to have contact with Natives who have achieved academic or career goals.

They indicated that it is difficult to imagine themselves in a career if they have never seen an other Native person there and that it is almost like they don't belong there if no other Natives are already there. Participant Three proposed that when Natives find themselves in unknown and unfamiliar territory, it is easier to quit than to forge ahead. In fact, two participants had quit school at times when they were close to finishing off a year. One cited problems with teachers and quit two weeks before final exams. The other quit on the night of his high school graduation ceremony. He stated that the pressure of getting good marks and being the first in his family to graduate was more than he was able to handle.

THE DECISION TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

The decision to return to school was in each instance influenced by consideration of what the future would hold. In one case, Participant One found himself becoming anxious about his future after being incarcerated for a period of six months. He realized, "That I needed an education. All you were working for was $2.ØØ a day for 15 hours a week. That changed me." New family obligations influenced Participant Two. "Raising my niece was what slowly got me started. And making a home for my girl when I had her." Participant Three, who had been working as a laborer, realized, "I won't be able to do it in ten years so I've got to find something that I can do in ten years." Others came

to the realization that they were unhappy with their jobs. "I think the main thing that got me to come back was the fact that I wasn't going anywhere with my job. I was doing asbestos removal and I got bored with that. It wasn't, it wasn't taking me anywhere." Participant Five recalled how she "got tired of being a secretary. It gets very tedious. And I figured I could do something better with myself."

In each case, the participants had encouragement to return to school. While family members were generally the most influential, it was noted that friends and co-workers also provided support and encouragement.

REMAINING IN SCHOOL

Two main themes were identified in determining what factors tended to keep Native students in school. They included having strong support systems and positive relationships with staff and students.

Support from family, friends, and staff members was identified as being an important factor in whether or not Native students remained in school. Students who had other family members in school or college appeared to have a more definite career goal than did others. Participant Three explained how his mother had him talk about his goals to reinforce his beliefs. Then she would ask questions which forced him to define exactly how he would go about achieving them. Families having more experience in dealing with the

educational system seemed to be more able to help students in overcoming school problems.

All participants are presently in an all Native program at the Alberta Vocational College and are unanimous in their approval and recommendation of this program. When asked to explain why this program is so good, the responses all focus on the relationships which have been formed between each student and the general staff and student population. The staff members, unlike many of their counterparts in the public school systems, appear available to support, assist, and push each student to his/her full potential. Whether in a public school system or in AVC, the Native students studied appeared to be more greatly influenced by the relationships they formed with their teachers than with specific courses offered. A positive learning environment in which students do not feel threatened or intimidated and in which they have formed personal relationships continually surfaced as being of utmost importance.

Another factor alluded to by the participants as influencing their decision to remain in school was self-esteem. It was felt that if students hold themselves in high regard and are able to ignore poor treatment by others, they are better able to handle adversity. Also, by identifying themselves as Natives and by learning more about the Native culture through education and/or exposure to Native elders or role models, Natives can gain the strength

to look for ways in which their culture can work in harmony with the mainstream culture.

NATIVE IDENTITY

Some of the participants had to grapple with their own identity as Natives. It appeared that those individuals who were comfortable with their cultural identity were able to devote more energy to achieving their goals. While each participant suggested that Native students would benefit from learning about their culture in school and from having contact with Native elders and/or role models, two found Native studies to be depressing and did not want to learn more themselves. Participant Three, who was brought up by a white adoptive father, described his upbringing as "normal," compared to a "traditional," or "Native" upbringing. When other children in school called him "wagon burner" or "squaw chief," he did not know what they meant and reacted by getting into fights. He also recalled being confused when a neighbor commented that he "didn't seem like a Native," and when other Natives accused him of being an "apple" - red on the outside and white inside. Participant Five found herself reorganizing her perception of what "Native" means when she found herself in an exclusively Native program. She was bothered when she realized that although she is Metis, she held many negative stereotypes about Natives.

DISCUSSION IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

While many studies have concluded that Native Canadians do poorly in school and leave early compared to the dominant population, few studies have attempted to look at the experiences of Native students to determine specific factors affecting their schooling. Although the author had an indication of the negative atmosphere in the schools felt by Native students, the nature and extent of this negative atmosphere was not known. The findings in this study illustrate some of the theories presented in the literature review but perhaps in a different light.

Campbell (1977) and Sando (1973) attribute the lack of success on the part of Native students to the differences in value orientations between the students and the non-Native teaching staff. In this study, it was found that often the Native students would like to achieve higher academic goals, but because they have no family history of educational success or achievement they simply have no idea of how to plan for academic success; teachers see only that the students are not progressing and assume that failure is due to a lack of effort. Participants also stated frustration that in some cases the teachers actually seemed to expect them to fail and did not push them to succeed.

Wilson (1991) found that Native students attributed their lack of success to a perceived isolation. In this study it was found that the participants did experience a

feeling of isolation from the dominant group but that other groups were also segregated. Membership in the various groups was based on different criteria such as race and clothing and appearance.

Natives have been portrayed poorly in history and the Native perspective of issues is often downplayed or ridiculed (Sando, 1973 & Trueba, 1988). Their suggestion that Native students are degraded was supported by the participants in this study. They noted that when they would comment about an issue in class, they ran the risk of being ridiculed. As a result, they generally would keep their opinions to themselves.

It was also found by Wilson (1991) that Native students often felt that teachers would ignore them in class or be less tolerant of behavior such as absences. Two of the Natives in this study also commented that teachers would often ignore Native students who had their hands raised to answer questions. Teachers were also accused of failing to respond to concerns raised by Native students and of making derogatory remarks about Natives.

Giles (1985) noted that value orientation seemed to influence the success of Native students. Those with an orientation more like mainstream society generally were more successful than those with a more traditional Native orientation. In two areas this was apparent. Those students who had a clear vision of their long-term educational goals

and a plan for achieving them were generally more successful than those students who had no clear long-term goals or only immediate goals.

With regard to self-loyalty versus group loyalty, the students who were successful had learned to make compromises. As one individual put it, "I look at it like I am number one, but also everybody else is number one until it starts hurting me and when it hurts me too much then I cut the strings."

A number of areas in which Native students have values which contradict or conflict with those held by educational institutions were identified by Campbell (1977). He found that while schools attempt to prepare students for careers that conform to the dominant culture, Natives tend to prefer learning life skills and focusing on personal development that will bring happiness within a Native cultural framework. While some of the participants in this study did in fact want to learn a particular occupation, the importance of teaching Native students about their culture was emphasized by each one.

Specific comments were made by two of the individuals recommending that elders be brought in to teach young people how to best bring into harmony the Native and dominant cultures. As well, some of the participants stated that the opportunities which they had to get together as a group and discuss solutions to problems was extremely beneficial.

These statements reflect exactly what Giles (1985) recommends when she suggests that we offer Native students an education which will assist them in achieving their own goals without compromising or abandoning their heritage.

One finding made by Campbell that was overwhelmingly supported in this study was the influence exerted by certain members of the teaching staff. What appeared to be important was the relationship formed between the student and staff member. Students who felt accepted, encouraged, and pushed by their teachers generally did well. Those who were criticized or ignored did poorly. As also noted by Campbell, the credentials of the individual teachers had no impact at all on the student perception of the worth of a teacher. Finally, a further finding of Campbell's was supported. He found that Native students did not blindly offer loyalty to institutionalized authority, but tended to reserve their loyalty for elders, kin, and friends. For some individuals loyalty to and respect for family members sometimes conflicted with school obligations.

Lee (1983), Henderson (1991), Jeanotte (1982), Crumb (1982), Aitken (1983), Wright (1991) and Trueba (1988) all make a case for providing personal and career counselling to Native students. The need for continuous support was echoed as well by the participants in this study. Each person felt that encouragement, praise, and general support were major

factors in determining his/her ability to remain on track through stressful situations or difficult times.

The importance of Native role models expressed by Chavez & Maestas-Flores (1991), Benjamin (1987), Aitken & Falk (1983), and Wright (1991) was also reflected in the comments made by the participants in this study. They explained that while it was difficult to imagine themselves in many careers, seeing Native persons in various careers gave them the encouragement to strive higher themselves.

DISCOVERIES

One unexpected recurring theme was the expression of fear and intimidation by the Native participants in the study. Participant Two stated that "Some of them (the Native students), they knew how to take care of themselves better. They could take it more. They were more braver than I was, I guess." This person also stated that the Native students didn't complain to their parents of poor treatment by teachers for fear of getting singled out and having to face further consequences at school. Participant Three indicated that "They (teachers) hate the kids. It could be maybe racially motivated; it could be because of attitude." Participant Four described the atmosphere in one city high school as being not good. "It was like, when you went there, you got an unsettling feeling that there's no discipline action there, and by the time the staff and the principal ever got around to breaking something up, there

was already enough damage done." In addition, he stated that "you've got to stand your ground as a Native student and if you don't do that right away, then they'll try and run you down." He also stated, "I don't usually try to open up too much 'cause if you open up too much then it can be used against you."

Although the lack of Native role models is identified in the literature as negatively affecting Native student success, the scope of its effect was greater than anticipated. Every participant in the study recommended making Native role models available to students as a means of encouraging them to remain in school. Three participants stated how not being able to see successful Natives in prestigious occupations resulted in them feeling that somehow such occupations were out of bounds for them. Perhaps as well this lack of Native role models does, as suggested by one participant, lead Native students to "self-destruct" when success appears within reach. As he stated, "I think, maybe in a way, for some people, it is a fear of achievement. Maybe they're going somewhere where they've never been before."

The literature does not appear to address the reasons why there are so few Native role models. It could be suggested that this situation is a result of the educational system in the 1950's and 1960's in which Native children were placed in residential schools. Perhaps this policy has

resulted in a generation of Native adults who are ill prepared to succeed in today's society. A further result of his policy may be the pattern of avoidance and/or mistrust exhibited by parents of Native children in the public schools today.

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As a result of information uncovered in this study, a number of considerations were identified. They include the effects of continuing negative experiences on school perseverance in Native students, implications for education and counselling, and areas of future research.

Effects of Experiences on School Perseverance

The experiences which the participants in this study have had have undoubtedly affected their perceptions of school and their decisions regarding whether or not to remain in or to return to school. While many negative experiences have been identified, many positive ones have also been shown.

All participants in the study have noted that at some time in their schooling they were awarded lower status than the majority of students and were treated differently by staff and students. They experienced verbal assaults and ridicule and were often compelled to disassociate themselves from their Native culture in an attempt to gain acceptance from other students. Some students were brought into physical confrontations as a result of teasing or provocation based on racial slurs.

Positive school experiences often were the result of a special relationship formed with a teacher. Teachers who were perceived as caring and supportive brought out the best

performance in their students. They helped to develop a safe learning environment which fostered the ability of Native students to take chances and pursue higher goals.

Implications for Education and Counselling

The present study has identified certain actions which could be taken to make schools more positive environments for our Native students. Some actions focus on teacher awareness and behavior; some focus on new directions in curriculum; others on the need for psychological support of Native Students.

An important first step in creating a more positive environment would be to make teachers and administrators more aware of their own negative stereotypes against Natives. By learning more about Native values, teachers may come to appreciate why Natives engage in particular behaviors and why some common teaching techniques simply do not promote, and in fact worsen, Native student performance. Also, teachers must be made aware that they exert influence on the learning atmosphere of their classrooms. They must question whether or not every student is valued and respected equally.

Secondly, schools must strive to develop supportive environments for their Native students. Native students must be able to feel that they can approach their teachers and counsellors and be listened to and taken seriously. They need to feel that their teachers are their advocates. To

promote this, teachers should be encouraged and supported in their attempts to learn about Native cultures and promote cultural awareness. If they can present different aspects of Native culture to their classes in a positive and well-informed manner, perhaps the Native students will feel more acceptance and more free to discuss problems with them. If possible, Native students should be encouraged to form clubs or groups based on their cultural heritage so that they can not only gain pride in their culture, but form a basis of support for each other. Such groups could meet on a regular basis to plan events and to discuss problems and solutions.

Thirdly, Native role models should be actively sought out and brought into the schools to interact with the Native students. For students who do not have a family history of educational experience or success, this would enable them to see other Natives who have accomplished goals in non-traditional areas. These role models could give Native students the courage to strike out as pioneers in new occupations.

Finally, the schools should re-evaluate the resources presently being used to teach students history and social studies. Materials which glorify individuals in history who brought about the death and destruction of Native Canadians should be eliminated. A perspective as unbiased as possible regarding Natives should be adopted. When discussing Native cultural groups, information should go beyond physical

descriptions of how they attained their basic needs. Included should be value orientations and how they made sense in the particular situations.

Counsellors must also consider a number of factors when working with Native students. It is important to realize that Native students likely do not have the same value orientation as a counsellor from the dominant cultural group. For this reason, the counsellor of choice for Native students would be a Native counsellor. If this is not possible, then the counsellor must be made aware that his/her perception of a situation and preferred manner of dealing with it may be totally different or unacceptable to a Native student. It would be beneficial if counsellors were made aware of the different Native cultural orientations so that they might deal more empathically with their students.

The counsellor must also be aware that although Native families are not generally actively involved in what is happening with their children at school, this does not mean that they are not concerned. It may simply be that they are timid and fearful of contact that may result in them being judged or labeled. Many Native parents have not had many positive school experiences.

Implications for Future Research

Many researchers have attempted to explain different performance on school related tasks as a function of

variation in cultural value orientation (Campbell, 1977; Giles, 1985; Kluckholm, 196Ø; and Sando, 1973). Some of the variations listed include Man-Nature Orientation, Time Orientation, Relational Orientation, as well as differing orientation toward rules and decision making, career choice, and basis for giving loyalty. Other researchers have given evidence that the lower overall performance of Native students is a result of historical factors (Wax, 1971).

The present study uncovered numerous factors which were held in common by many or all of the participants. Further examination of these factors would be beneficial in exposing their significance so that action may be taken to modify the way Native students are dealt with within the school system. One comment that was brought up repeatedly during the study was the lack of Native role models available to students. Further study in this area might examine the lack of role models as perhaps a result of the generation(s) of Natives removed from their homes and placed in residential schools only to find themselves not fitting in either the dominant or Native society. Further study in this area might also examine the impressions left on the parents and grandparents regarding the value of and state of present day education. How these impressions affect the aspirations of their children and grandchildren might also be investigated.

Research could also examine the "Fear of Success" theory maintained by one of the participants in this study.

How much does the anxiety of entering unknown educational and career territory prevent Native students from achieving success? What could be done to encourage and assist Native students embarking on new educational or career journeys? How could the availability of Native role models improve the chances of student success?

The impact of self-esteem was also raised by some of the participants in this study. Further research could examine what, if any, the effects are of being a dominated minority member. Additional investigations could also examine and evaluate the effects of programs in the schools which do teach Native culture including bringing in Elders. Are the students involved better able to make cultural compromises which will allow them to succeed in the dominant society yet remain true to their own cultural identity and beliefs?

Other research could examine differential treatment of Native and other minority students by teachers and how this affects student performance and aspirations. Do teachers treat minority students differently? Do they have differing standards regarding student performance? Do they give the same quantity and quality of assistance to Native and minority students as they do to students of the dominant group?

Finally, the importance of student-staff and student-student relationships could be examined. Does, as suggested

by this study, the development of a comfortable and trusting relationship between students and staff lead to the Native student working harder and achieving higher goals? Do Native students have a greater need for an educational environment that they perceive to be nonjudgemental and non-threatening? The whole issue of relationships should be studied in order to determine better staffing and organizational policies within schools having high Native populations.

SUMMARY

School experiences greatly affect the perceptions that Native students have about the educational process. Positive experiences promote staying in school; negative experiences discourage it. When Native students are able to develop special relationships with their teachers, they report being able to take chances and strive for excellence. In situations in which the students feel threatened or that they are treated differently than the other students because of their Native background, they tend to withdraw or to disassociate themselves from their Native culture.

Counsellors must be made aware of certain factors when working with Native students. They must recognize that their value orientation is likely different than that of the students. By familiarizing themselves with Native values, they can work with students in a manner which is compatible to their Native beliefs. Counsellors must also recognize

that what may appear to be Native parent apathy with regard to student performance may in fact be a reflection of fear and mistrust of the school system.

Educators must work to create a more positive environment for their Native students. Teachers and administrators must be made aware of their negative stereotypes against Natives and must attempt to value and respect each student equally. As well as being made aware of teaching techniques that promote rather that stifle Native success, teachers should strive to create supportive environments for their Native students.

Educators can also shed a more positive light on Native culture by bringing into the schools Native role models and by re-evaluating the resources presently being used to teach history and social studies. Resources should give a balanced view of Native cultures and provide value orientations and explanations of how they make sense in the context in which they were developed.

Research could also examine topics such as the fear of success and the unknown on Native students performance and the scarcity of Native role models, the impact of promoting Native culture and its effects on Native self-esteem, and the nature of teacher-student relationships and their effects on Native student success.

Finally, the possibility of differential treatment of Native and other minority students could be examined to

determine possible consequences. Overall classroom environment could also be examined to determine its affect on Native student performance.

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APPENDIX A
Thematic Abstractions from Participant One's Experience

[Two Levels of Abstraction]

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Paraphrases	Themes
1. It was a mistake for us to go there	trouble attributed to moving	Moving
2. All I had was my aunt, my dad, and my grandmother. That's who brought us up, our grandparents. My dad was disabled in a car accident and through a divorce, I guess won the children in the divorce	main care-givers unstable	Unstable Family Dynamics
3. I used to skip lots. ...I got into it once with some friends and never quit after	influenced by peers	Negative Relationship -peers
4. My cousin went there before and so I started meeting his friends. The wrong crowd, you know. They were into trouble and all that before	bad influence	Negative Relationship -peers
5. I was talking to my cousins. I just quit because they quit	going with the crowd	Negative Relationship -peers
6. But more alcohol, more into that. I didn't even want to play in sports after. I just quit	going with the crowd	Negative Relationship -peers
7. I think it's all peer pressure. From the older students, you know. Drugs, alcohol, crime. You need the money you know	bad influence	Negative Relationship -peers

8.	There's jobs out there to go to work. Why stick in that school? Go work. Get money. To party. Get drugs. Buy a car	Felt he could get what he wanted without school	School not Relevant
9.	Have some of the teachers there that's Native or something. I don't care for it (learning about Native culture)	Native Role Models	Role Models -Native
1Ø.	...he would just ignore me. (Did he treat all the students like that?) I think only the students that had trouble in it. I used to skip lots	perceived neg. treatment as a result of own weakness or attitude	Negative Relationship -teacher
11.	Like, um, some subjects I wanted to learn and they didn't want to teach me. They never had time for me to teach	perception he was not valued	Negative Relationship -teacher
12.	Just, well, maybe I did, Indians in one group, maybe a couple of white people, and that's all	identified with Natives	Native Identification
13.	...only the students that had trouble in it. He just ignored them	teachers paid attention to the bright students	Negative Relationship -teachers
14.	I want a better life for my family, like my son, soon to be wife	planning for future	Future Planning
15.	(Result of education:) A better job, maybe? Training or something	sees benefits of education	Future Planning

16.	I got into it (skipping) once with friends and never quit. Follow the crowd, you know	Friends bad influence	Negative Relationship -peers
17.	Some subjects I wanted to learn and they didn't want to teach me	subjects not relevant to his needs	Negative Relationship -teachers
18.	Like I wanted to learn fractions, but he never had time to show me nothing	school not meeting his needs	Negative Relationship -teachers
19.	we used to talk, they'd always be telling me to stay in school	some family members would offer verbal support	Support -family
20.	I hardly bother with them (brothers and sisters) now. Stick to my own	views family as unreliable	Negative Relationship -family
21.	There was my counsellor. She just got along with everybody	feels accepted	Positive Relationship -teacher
22.	Like an old teacher from the Sacred Trails Program. I'm still friends with him. He brought me up here and introduced me to _____. He helped me out once, too. I couldn't forget that. Like, after my grandfather's death	was accepted and helped by teacher	Positive Relationship -teacher
23.	It's enjoyable, like joking around and that, eh. Teachers are alright. Students, too	feels comfortable in present learning situation	Positive Relationship -teacher -peers
24.	Even now that I have a hard time with things. I even have to talk to someone	needs someone to support and encourage	Support -school staff

25.	All the way through school, they always put me in special ed. or somewhere, you know, or alternate ed.	feels segregated from rest of students	Negative Relationship -teachers -peers
26.	(When you went to that school in the city did you have lots of friends?) No, not ever	felt alone in a new setting	Negative Relationship -peers
27.	Go play sports with someone they know	students should get involved in group activities	Positive Relationship -peers
28.	When you needed help, she was there	felt connected with counsellor	Positive Relationship -teacher
29.	Have some more of the elders in there, maybe? Have some of the teachers there that's Native or something	importance of Native role models	Role Models -Native
3Ø.	I was always thinking about going back to school. I was going out with my girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, at the time, and she was going to the Sacred Trails Program, so then I went with her just for a while to see what it's about and they asked me if I wanted to start	was introduced to program by friends	Positive Relationship -peers
31.	Oh, like I thought like I needed school, eh, and after a while I started thinking, "wholly smokes, I needed school"	realization that his life was going nowhere	Future Planning
32.	There was signs out there. So I asked a few people and got an interview	realized that he needed some education	Future Planning

33.	Then I decided to come up to visit and I heard about this program, this UCEP	learned about program from former teacher	Positive Relationship -teacher
34.	Loosing my freedom. It was taken away from me for six months. I was incarcerated. It changes your life. That I needed an education. All you were working for was $2:ØØ a day. 15 hours a week. Weekends, too. See, that changed me	saw that he never have any potential to earn money	Future Planning
35.	No one else would change it, you have to change it yourself. You've got to go out and do it	realization that he controlled his own fate	Accept Responsibility for Future
36.	I hardly go out any more. I stay home now	knows he has to stay out of trouble	Accept Responsibility for Future
37.	I don't know, it was just a big party then, you know. Right after the holidays, eh. It kept on and on. I just quit because they quit	went along with the crowd	Negative Relationship -peers
38.	But I started knowing better, you know. I thought I'd find a job or something after I's done school in Regina just after I quit. There's jobs out there to work. Why stick with school?	Felt he could get what he wanted without school	School not Relevant
39.	he never had time to show me nothing. So it kept up for a while so I just dropped out	felt rejected by teacher	Negative Relationship -teacher

40.	No, he never even had time for that (giving help) during class. So he never had time so I just got fed up with it and quit	felt rejected by teacher	Negative Relationship -teacher
41.	I just push it to the side. I just do one. Like in English, I just do one and the rest I push to the side. (What other subjects do you push to the side?) Computers, science, and career planning	when he feels overwhelmed by school, he withdraws	Withdrawal
42.	I wish that they had more patience and understanding. There is more than one student	felt that teachers only had time for bright students	Negative Relationship -teacher

APPENDIX B
Thematic Abstractions from Participant Two's Experience

[Two Levels of Abstraction]

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Paraphrases	Themes
1. But I kept moving, though, 'cause my Grandma and my mom and dad would pick us up for a few months, they took us, during the school year. But mostly we stayed there	children did not remain in one location with one care giver	Unstable Family Dynamics
2. I was the times that mom and them would take us and my grandma would get mad at us so she'd drop us off at my mom's and she knew I hated it, but she'd do it anyway. My mom used to drink a lot and my dad	children were never able to set down roots in one location	Unstable Family Dynamics
3. For all the people that I know, almost, it's because of their family at home. Like, the trouble at home and stuff	Native students leave school because of poor home life	Unstable Family Dynamics
4. Or else we'd talk to each other and that would be good enough	Native friends would support each other without involving parents	Positive Relationship -peers
5. It would have been really hard because I would have felt that I was totally, I wouldn't have felt like I could fit in, like be as good as them and stuff	Felt that she belonged with other Native students. They supported and encouraged each other	Negative Relationship -peers

6. Like my Native Studies. I don't know, I just don't care about learning it. It's so depressing	Doesn't see relevance of Native studies yet is in an entirely Native program	Native Identification
7. And they just seemed to help the white people more. That's how it was going to school. And they'd help us if there was time left over or else if they liked you or something.	perception that Native students were treated differently than white students	Negative Relationship -teachers
8. We'd all have our hands up, like a lot, everybody in the class and they'd always go to, like, the white farmer kids and that, and stuff, and they'd help them first	perception that Native students were treated differently than white students	Negative Relationship -teachers
9. A couple of teachers were really mean and that. They'd just come and knock us in the head with a book or something, "Are you paying attention?"	differential treatment for Native students	Negative Relationship -teacher
10. 'Cause some of them were really, they knew how to take care of themselves better, like they didn't give a shit how much shit they got into. They could take it more. They were braver than I was, I guess	perception that prejudice was something you handled	Negative Relationship -teacher
11. And it just seemed, all I did was wanted to get my school, and, like, I didn't really care about it like I do now. Like, I just want to get off	Wants to succeed Sees school work as important	Future Planning

	welfare. Before I wasn't thinking too positive at the beginning, but now I am		
12.	I didn't want to go there any more because it seemed like we were just learning baby stuff	school didn't seem relevant in grade 1Ø	School not Relevant
13.	Like, it would have been everything, like, my clothing and my lunch, like, it would have been everything. My homework. It would have been everything that I thought about. Just a sandwich we'd have and that would be it	Felt judged by other students Felt intimidated	Negative Relationship -peers
14.	I was thinking I could be useful. I am useful. I'm not nothing	Confidence brought about by relationship with family members	Support -family
15.	I want to take small business at NAIT	Values education Making plans for future	Future Planning
16.	I'm doing this for myself and for them to get off welfare. I hate being on welfare and I really want an education. 'Cause my whole family is either into nursing or, lawyers, they're all into something and I feel like I'm the only one who doesn't have an education	Sees how other family members have been pos. affected by education	Role Models -Native
17.	I don't want them just content living on welfare	Wants children to have a better life	Future Planning

18.	I guess I've noticed that there's just not a lot for me to do back home and be on the reserve without no education	Sees education as a means to improve lifestyle and standard of living	Future Planning
19.	Or if I go home and have family coming or something, I just won't do nothing about my tests, about my studies. I just leave it and hope I have I have enough know-ledge to do the test	When forced to choose between family and school family usually takes priority	Importance of Family
2Ø.	Like, I try to do everything at school so I don't have to take anything home. That's how I do it now. Instead of the other way. The other way, because I lose the other way and this way if I keep on top of things...	Tries to accommodate family and school responsibilities	Importance of Family
21.	She's really nice and that, but she pushes me. Sometimes I thought she would be picking on me and stuff like that 'cause I thought I was doing really good. And she always expected more than that and here, I learned so much	Felt it difficult to work with teacher until relationship was established	Positive Relationship -teacher
22.	(What are things that make school good for you?) Getting my A's!	Success leads to motivation	Motivation
23.	For me, grandma always believed the principal	Family subservient to school	Family Relationship with School-negative

24.	I kept going and my family were really proud of me (saying) you did a good move by moving out here and things like that	encouraged by family	Support -family
25.	They're always saying "You can do so many things" and they're always encouraging me all the time and they're always doing different things to make me feel really good about myself	encouraged by family	Support -family
26.	But I find that having a lot of people to talk to when you need them and stuff and encouragement I do better. That's what kept me in school	identifies strong support as important in staying in school	Positive Relationship -peers -teachers
27.	I really need my security, you know. Like, say I, that I belong somewhere	Need to be in a supportive environment	Positive Relationship -peers
28.	I would talk to my English teacher and she would say things about my writing and stuff and about my work and she'd really just talk me through and build me up	needs encouragement. Success is more likely with a relationship with a teacher	Positive Relationship -school staff
29.	I talked to them all (counsellors). Actually, the secretary's really good, too. She's always there to talk to you, and I talk to her when I need somebody to talk to	Relationship with staff an important factor in developing a learning climate	Positive Relationship -school staff

3Ø.	I had a counsellor there and he was always helping me out lots and he got into school here and everything. He kept phoning _____ and phoning him to give me a chance	Relationship with caring staff important	Positive Relationship -school staff
31.	It would be hard to be the only Native. I think it would be hard. But if he had a lot of the same nationality it would be easier	Feels insecure if the only Native in a group	Positive Relationship -peers
32.	I always to talk to the teacher. I get really upset (about own kids)	As a parent is not intimidated by the school system	Family Relationship with School- positive
33.	Why bring everybody into it, because when you bring your family into it, it just gets kind of centered out	Did not want to draw negative attention to self or family	Family Relationship with School -negative
34.	A lot of people are from Saskatchewan, quite a few of them. So just being from the same place is more relaxing	Positive environment	Positive Relationship -peers
35.	...and _____'s really good. I never seen him mad since I've been here	Staff supportive and positive	Positive Relationship -teacher
36.	Like you walk in here and they'll say "Hi, good morning" like all of them. They always take time out to notice you and they talk to you whatever. They make small talk or they'll even have lunch with us,	Supportive environment Relationship with staff important	Positive Relationship -school staff

	whatever, or they'll come join us		
37.	I don't think they should have one Native school. I don't like that idea. They just end up, I don't know, it just gets too rank for some reason	Feeling that isolation from dominant culture would lead to disaster. Need to work with the dominant culture	Positive Relationship -peers
38.	Raising my niece was what slowly got me started. I was slowly growing up, realizing boozers, sure it's all right once in a blue moon, but not like how I was. And making a home for my girl when I just had her	Growing up and gaining responsi-bilities made the need for education more apparent	Future Planning

APPENDIX C
Thematic Abstractions from Participant Three's Experience

[Two Levels of Abstraction]

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Paraphrases	Themes
1. In some terms, I was raised by my adoptive father, you know, he raised us like, basically, normal ...the way I was raised by my grandparents	While growing up, he was influenced by Native values until his mother married a man from the dominant culture. Then his frame of reference changed	Unstable Family Dynamics
2. I was in Sherbrooke for about four years, five years. Then we moved to Westlock for two years or a year and a half and then we moved back to the city and I went to school	Participant changed schools and communities	Moving
3. There was a lot of pressure, too. I guess now that I look at it, it's funny because back then, when I was 18 and I was graduating, I would have been the first one in my family to graduate high school, and everybody had all these expectations on me	Participant was in unknown territory and felt uncomfortable No role models were available to guide him	Role Models -Native
4. You know, I was expecting to get these marks and I was expecting to achieve this and that, but I didn't. Not only that, plus I got into the bars, sort of partying and stuff like that. Just, I wanted to work instead so I just quit school	The pressure of doing well was too much to handle. Find an other option or excuse	Negative Relationship -peers

5.	I think I put a lot of pressure on myself. I made a lot of excuses for myself. I think, you know, I thought about this, too. Not only me, but all my relatives and a lot of my friends. They seem to have this little self-destruct button inside. For some reason, maybe in some term, they feel like they're achieving something. They always look for that one little thing to make them self-destruct. Always looking for that one little excuse to make themselves destruct and they do it. And they always find a reason, even if it's a stupid reason, they'll find a reason	When the pressure gets too great, it's easier to bail out than forge ahead in unfamiliar territory	Fear of Success
6.	Self-destruct. You know it's, they let themselves self-destruct. When any little problem comes up, for some, I don't know what the reason is. It happens. It still happens to me. At school now, I start looking for, um, I had a problem last month with some minor stuff, but I let it get to me so bad, I said to my mom, "To hell with it. I'm going to quit school and go back to work. To hell with it"	When the pressure gets too great it's tempting to bail out	Fear of Success
7.	You know, my sister's done the same thing. She's in academic upgrading and she was looking for excuses. She wasn't saying, "Well,	When the pressure gets too great it's tempting to bail out	Fear of Success

	I'm quitting because of this and this and this," but she was saying, "Well, I have to quit because of blah, blah, blah"		
8.	I think, maybe in a way for some people, it's a fear of achievement. Maybe they're going somewhere where they've never been before	Native students have little prior experience to base expectations on	Role Models -Native
9.	It was just the people I chose to hang out with, I guess. I chose the crowd to hand out with and we pleased ourselves. Like, if we had any problem, we'd just tell so and so, and so and so would take care of it. ...either I could talk my way out of it, or I could, if I couldn't beat the guy, I'd get somebody to kick his ass	Chose to hang out with rough crowd	Negative Relationship -peers
1Ø.	I guess it all depends on the people you run with, the people you hang around with. And one group of people was into drugs, the booze, the partying, and, you know, I almost died, shit, due to partying with these guys	There was pressure to conform to the group	Negative Relationship -peers
11.	My friend had a lot of problems when he was going to St. Joe's because of his values and stuff. He had to take religion, and was very heavy into the traditional values and way of doing things and he wouldn't, let's put it this way, he just didn't last too long in	The teacher was looking for conformity. Facing a hostile environment, he chose to quit school	Negative Relationship -teacher

	religion because his views and his understanding wasn't what the teacher was looking for, and the teacher just assumed that he didn't want to participate in class, so he ended up quitting religion and eventually school		
12.	The other guy I hung around with had traditional values. He didn't drink; he didn't smoke. We always went to pow-wows. But when I hung out with this direction because I wanted to be one of the 'in' people, I'd meet the girls and that	This friend was a good influence and had a lot to offer, but he wasn't cool	Negative Relationship -peers
13.	But then the other group was just girls. My girl friends, like, they weren't my 'girl-friends' but they were friends. You could always have better conversations with girls than with guys in some ways	The girls were good to hang around with because he didn't have to be macho	Positive Relationship -peers
14.	She (sister) went to the Dinwoodie the other night and some guy yelled at her something from behind the counter, just for not reason, yet he was really nice to the lady beside her. He just yelled, told my sister to wait or something like that and yelled. My sister was so intimidated she didn't say anything to him	Sister made to feel inferior to non-Natives	Prejudice

15.	In some terms, I was raised by my adoptive father, you know. He raised us like, basically normal. To me, like, you have traditional families and Natives and that. I didn't really consider myself Native. Like, that didn't bother me	He was not raised in a Native household. Didn't think of himself as Native	White Identification
16.	Oh, I got called "wagon burner" a lot and, I don't know, "squaw chief," names like that. I got it from the kids and I just found out what it meant, that's why I never said anything. Had I known, you know, what it did, it didn't mean anything, it wouldn't have bothered me, but it did because of...	While he didn't consider himself a Native, he was being labeled as one and put down as one	Negative Relationship -peers Native Identification
17.	Like, I still have a hard time being with Natives, like, because I'm in two different areas. A lot of the Natives call me "Apple" because, just the way I talk and I act. They say "Well, you're acting white." But also when I hang around a lot of white people like this, I never used to think about this. People used to always say this to me, like, all my closer friends, people I looked up to, like one of them, my neighbor, used to say, "You don't seem like a Native," and I never used to think about that	He finds that he is not fully accepted by whites or Natives	Negative Relationship -peers Native Identification

18.	My goal is still the same now. It's, I want to get into a field that deals with young Native kids where it helps them also deal with, just, fitting in	Future plans involve Native students	Future Planning
19.	It (being a Native in a public school) depends on what age. You know, I guess it's different in a lot of ways. To me, to be honest, the hardest time would be when the kids are younger, like, say when they're 7, 8, 9, or 1Ø. Around there, and then everybody is looking for their own little niche to fall into	When kids get older they see that everybody is not the same. They look for a place to fit in	Negative Relationship -peers
2Ø.	My first instinct was to fight. I guess at first I bitched and complained to my dad and my mom. But my dad had the same rules of thumb. Like you shouldn't put up with that. My mom was totally different. It upset my mom a lot. So I just started fighting	When kids teased him at school, his parents each had different reactions	Negative Relationship -peers
21.	Oh, I told the teachers and that, too. I got the strap all the time. I think I held the record for our school for elementary for our grade for getting the strap, and he knew why I got into fights	Principal did not deal with problem underlying fighting	Negative Relationship -teachers -peers

22.	"He's no better than you are, you know." But she says, like, "Well, I felt like he was." And I think a lot of people feel that way	Natives feel intimidated when faced with prejudicial behavior	Negative Relationship -peers
23.	I had a really bad attitude in school and that probably had a lot to do with it. (Why teachers singled him out) I just was easy to excite	He felt like a target and was always getting into trouble for fighting	Negative Relationship -peers -teachers
24.	Teachers are human. They're just like, they hate the kids, it could be maybe racially motivated, it could be because of attitude. It could be their personality	He feels he has been abused by teachers but seems reluctant to call it prejudice	Negative Relationship -teachers
25.	I think if you are able to, rather than be the only Native in a classroom, and if you are able to associate with other people where you're comfortable, you're able to learn more freely	In a regular classroom where he is a minority member, he feels uncomfortable and is unable to concentrate on learning	Positive Relationship -peers
26.	But, like, threatened, it was hard because at school, sometimes, it was hard being Native. Everybody needs to feel better than somebody else in school, so they always look for the weakest ones, the weakest people.	He felt the public school was an uncom-fortable place to learn because he was always being picked on	Negative Relationship -peers

27.	I mentioned something and a lot of the kids started laughing and started making jokes and stuff like that. Saying, "You should know about that," and, "Ask your mom," and stuff like that, you know. It was very uncomfortable to learn. It was very hard. And so, I guess to fit in, everybody does certain things and I guess I just shut my mouth	He was not able to openly discuss things from a Native perspective for fear of being ridiculed	Negative Relationship -peers
28.	But, believe it or not, just even having that team concept, it was very, you know, you just don't have one person behind you, you've got the whole team	By having Native kids involved in team sports their self-esteem can be raised	Positive Relationship -peers
29.	We joke about things that a lot of people wouldn't understand. We joke about things like rabbit stew, and stuff like that. You can joke, you can be very easy going, you can talk about stuff like that. You can talk about traditional values. Stuff like that. You don't have people laughing at you or they won't sit there and try judging you over that reason	In an all-Native environment, it is easier to let your guard down. You don't feel like you are being compared or judged	Positive Relationship -peers
3Ø.	I used to always for the longest time, believe, like my dad used to always joke but he didn't realize how serious it was by saying, "You're only a	He was led to believe he was a second-class citizen	Prejudice

	Native. You're only a Native" You know, just a kid, but, to me, after a while I started believing, well, I'm less a person than he is because I'm Native		
31.	It was none of their business to discuss. "So and So's mother is probably a, you know. She probably drinks or something." Or something about the way the kid's dressed. The way they dress their kids, the way they groom their kids. The person must be drunk	Teachers made assumptions about Native students' parents	Negative Relationship -teachers
32.	My goal is still the same now. It's I want to get into a field where it deals with young Native kids for counselling, setting up programs for kids where it helps them deal with, just, fitting in. Dealing with cultural problems and things like that. Personal identity and stuff like that	His goal is to work in an area in which he identifies certain problems for Native youth	Future Planning
33.	I won't be able to do it (labor work) in 10 years so I've got to be realistic and say, "Well, I've got to find something that I can do in 10 years	Realizes that his options are limited without an education	Future Planning
34.	Like, to stay in school high school, to stick it out for my final year was my psychology teacher, HM. He made going to school really bearable. You could sit there and argue	He valued a student-teacher relationship which enabled him to communicate as an equal and not in a subordinate	Positive Relationship -teacher

	with the guy. You could sit there and give different view points. If you sat there and argued and gave a good reason, he could up your mark	position	
35.	I look at it like I am number one, but also everybody else is number one until it starts hurting me and when it hurts me too much then I cut the strings	He is not looking out only for himself, but he does not let others get in way of him achieving goals	Future Planning
36.	A lot of kids just hate school. You know, I don't think it has anything to do with color. Just, school is boring	School not relevant to wants/needs of many students. They do not see relationship to their future	Future Planning
37.	He's saying, "Look at me. I've got a grade four-five education and I'm having a tough time the way it is now. Hopefully you won't make the same mistake I did." He's supportive	Stepfather encourages him to get an education	Support -family
38.	She's positive. She also tells me how important it is and she'll talk to me about my goals, just to reinforce my beliefs. She'll ask me questions about what I want to do and how I want to do it, and then she'll say, "Well, what would you have to do to this, to accomplish it?"	Mother supports and gives guidance. Helps him to envision and plan for the future	Future Planning

39.	I think if people had better support systems, better support systems maybe? That would really make a difference	Students need constant encouragement	Support -staff and environment
40.	I needed lots of pats on the back when I was younger to achieve. I always needed somebody to pat me on the back. Saying, "Good, good stuff. Way to go"	Constant encouragement a key in his success	Support -staff and environment
41.	Like, when school's over, like say you have the support in school, right, but when you go home you don't have the parents, you know, what do you look for You look to fit in. You look to be accepted so what are you going to do? You're going to go with whoever accepts you and probably that could be somebody who wants to, you know, take you in a bad way	He feels that support systems must be put in place that are year round	Support -staff and environment
42.	Mom's never comfortable with anything. She never has been. It's hard for her because she was raised differently. She was raised in reform schools and ...	Mother went to residential schools and does not feel comfortable in dealing with schools now	Family Relationship to School -negative
43.	But a lot of people are like that, like a lot of Native people have that mentality. They're very guarded and they're very, I don't know. I don't even know if that ties into what we're talking about, like, a lot of Native people seem very guarded and very private because,	Many Natives distrust the school system because of past experience with it or because they are unfamiliar with it	Family Relationship to School -negative

	they're afraid of getting burned or they seem, they always think there's an angle. People are always playing an angle, they think, so they're always paranoid. Until they get to know you		
44.	I think, to be honest, it would make everything a little bit more realistic where you could say, "It's achievable." You'd see and say, "You've done it, I can do it. She's done it; I can do it." And you're afraid to be a pioneer and you don't see anyone else in that field you can talk to, you can talk to people. You're saying, "Well, jeez." You worry about small little things. "How am I going to be able to, you know, fit into this field, or how am I going to be able to fit in this area? But if you see somebody already there, well then it's a little bit easier	It is difficult for a Native to imagine him/herself in a career in which there are no Natives present	Role Models -Native
45.	You get some teachers that are that bad where they don't, you know, they'd rather single you out and make you look stupid so when you feel stupid you don't ask question. And that's how it was for me	He felt singled out by teachers who wanted to keep him in line	Negative Relationship -teacher

APPENDIX D
Thematic Abstractions from Participant Four's Experience

[Two Levels of Abstraction]

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Paraphrases	Themes
1. There were some family problems going on and by mom's husband was working two jobs and he couldn't handle working both jobs and he couldn't get back to _____ so I withdrew from school to take over with him and help him do his job	He knew that if things got rough at school, he had an option	Unstable Family Dynamics
2. And then after that a lot of family problems were constantly coming up. My younger brother was always in and out of jail and it was just really hard on my mom being a single parent, having three kids. So I'd have to leave school, go to work with her boyfriend, her husband, whatever, and then come home and help her take care of the two younger ones	Events at home contributed to his leaving school	Unstable Family Dynamics
3. Junior high and part of high school, I mostly kept to myself. It was the only white school and there wasn't very many Native students there, and the students that were there, they weren't , they were always skipping school and that, so I just basically just kept to myself and did my work as I was supposed to do	Felt he did not belong with white students and that other Natives were not good students	Negative Relationship -peers

	in class		
4.	And I tried going back to school again to Bellerose Composite High School, and that, I was in an IOP program. It worked out pretty good until two weeks before finals and I got into arguments with my teachers and that ended up coming up pretty short	Near the end of the year he is in conflict with teachers	Negative Relationship -teachers
5.	People were either picking on my younger brothers or just trying to pick fights with me. Just out of any reason. Just, when you were at school, there was mostly jocks hanging out with the jocks, and, like, just, just to build your self-esteem up and their egos. That's the main reason why we just fought	Students tried to establish a pecking order	Negative Relationship -peers
6.	I had a couple of friends at school. We just mostly stayed at school. We'd go out once and a while after school, but that was about it. One was part Native and the other one was white	Peer group was rather low key	Positive Relationship -peers
7.	I was arguing with him because I was getting in a lot of trouble and all that and I had asked them many times to talk to the, talk to the students about it and they weren't doing anything about it so I took it into my own hands and we got into a big scrap and after that my teachers got on my case about it and said	Could not relate to staff. Not happy with how he felt staff was dealing with his problems	Negative Relationship -teachers

	if it happens again, we're going to expel you. So I say, "Well, go ahead." He was doing that all the time as a threat. So I said, "If you're going to do it, do it." So he said, "You're gone." So I packed my stuff and left		
8.	The only teacher that actually supported me was the science teacher and I had him in my first semester	Felt this person did support him	Positive Relationship -teacher
9.	I talked it over with my family and my mom said, "It's up to you." And I said, "Well, if I do drop out of school, I'm going to work." And she said, "Fine." So, the next day I went into classes and explained to them what was going on, and the counsellor there didn't want to do very much about it so I just said OK, and filled the forms out, and that was it	Felt as though he received no support from school counsellor	Negative Relationship -teacher
10.	He (counsellor) just said that he had stuff to do and he was teaching classes as well so there wasn't very much time for me to see him and that. And when I did try to talk to him, he could talk for maybe two or three minutes then he'd have an appointment or something so I just said, Maybe next time or something. I never bothered going back. I tried working the	Feeling that counsellor was indifferent to his problems	Negative Relationship -teacher

	problems out myself		
11.	For high school, it was mostly everybody just sat in their own little groups. If you weren't part of that group then you weren't, you didn't have nothing to do with nobody	Sense of Isolation	Negative Relationship -peers
12.	The atmosphere around there wasn't too good. It was like, when you went there, you got an unsettling feeling that there's no discipline action there, and by the time the staff and the principal ever got around to breaking something up, there was already enough damage done	Unsettling feeling that something bad was always about to happen	Negative Relationship -peers -teachers
13.	Now that I'm in an atmosphere where I have control over what I want to do and the curriculum here is good, the staff is really good here, and, I think I'd rather stay here than go back to an ordinary high school	Present school atmosphere very good	Positive Relationship -school staff
14.	It's when I first started out I was really nervous about it and now, after the time that we've been here, it's getting easier. Like, we all know each other. It's really easy to talk to people rather than having to go see the counsellor and make an appointment three weeks in advance when you're having problems that day. Here, if we have a problem, we talk	Supportive non-threatening environment	Positive Relationship -school staff -peers

	to any one of the staff members about it and they'll help us the best they can. If no, we just talk to our friends about it. We just, someone's around to help us		
15.	They want us to succeed, whereas if we were still in school, the teacher wouldn't be pushing us. They'd just be giving us the assignment, marking it, and handing it back. And here, if there is something wrong with our work, the teacher will sit down and explain it to us what we're doing and how we can do it better	Positive learning environment/sense of accomplishment	Positive Relationship -teachers
16.	If I never handed in an assignment, I just got a zero and that was it. The teacher asked for it once, and if you don't hand it in, the next day you have a zero. They never went any farther with it	Teachers made assumption that students were write-offs	Negative Relationship -teachers
17.	It felt kind of discriminatory in there. Like some of the students got it really easy and, I don't know, I guess the more rowdier crowd, like people with long hair, like the staff, the teachers thought they had an attitude problem and they have it a lot harder	Teachers judged students by their appearance	Negative Relationship -teachers

18.	There was times where certain students would constantly be picked and we'd sit there in class, and there's guys in there with long hair and that that had, like, 70 or 80% averages, and the teacher would never call on them at all	Discrimination based on status	Negative Relationship -teachers
19.	Certain students would always get called on. They'd always have the better marks in the class. Come around to go and do something, it was these students who are doing it and nobody else. In our English class, it was mostly about five or six people that were always chosen to do the assignment. Some them didn't even have their assignments and they were doing it anyway. We just thought that was really bad. Nothing but crap so a lot of us just said, "Well, I'm dropping the class." About 8 or 10 of us dropped the class	When students felt that they were being treated unfairly, they chose to withdraw	Negative Relationship -teachers
20.	The staff won't listen so forget it. We'll just drop the class	If treated unfairly, it is OK to quit	Negative Relationship -teachers
21.	My school goals are to finish the UCEP class in the top five, hopefully have English 33 and continue at AVC for another year taking the business administration course. And then going over to NAIT and finish my accounting there	Values education. Goal are made	Future Planning

22.	(Influence) to come back to school it had to have been my mom and my kid brother	Family Support	Support -family
23.	When I was a kid, I was always compared to my cousins and that. Now that I'm back in school, and now they're just, one's working. I think he's a security guard for six dollars an hour. Another's working at a movie place and that's about it. I said that I want to surpass everything. I want to be the first one of our family to go to college or university	Motivation and planning for the future	Future Planning
24.	And right now my uncle is getting pretty close to that now. He's taking the UCEP course at Concordia College and he wants to become a lawyer. When he was going to high school, I was just starting school and he used to have all the homework, and he used to have homework all the time and now he still has homework and whenever we have, whenever he's got a problem with math or something, he calls me up and he asks me if I know how to do it. And if I know how to do it, I help him and he helps me in return, later on. And, he's a pretty good guy	He admires his uncle and likes to help and be helped	Role Model -Native

25.	Henry Winkler. He was a big supporter with his shows. He got his acting career going and now that he's done that he's surpassed what he was doing before as an actor and has become a producer and director. And it takes a lot to do that. Like, you have to know what you're doing. You have to be able to go to school, fight through the school, and then fight to get your stuff going, to get your career going again	Views this as one person who overcame adversity to achieve goals	Role Model -non-Native
26.	My kid brother has influenced me by staying in school. He's now doing grade 10 and 11 courses at St. Joe's, and by him staying in school and taking, not smoking or anything like that, he's doing a lot for himself. And, I've always been envious of him. He's been able to do what I wanted to do when I was a kid. He's been able to hold down a part time job and he's been able to go at it without problems and still get his work done	Values the ability to work with determination toward achieving goals	Role Model -family
27.	I know a couple of people that go here and they tell me about some of the friends we used to hand around with and a lot of them are now in university and that and some other friends are, I used to work with them and now they're still stuck in the same job, and	Friends support and encourage	Positive Relationship -peers

	they're kicking themselves for not staying in school. And now that I'm in there, it's really encouraging me to go, keep fighting for what I want and I think that's pretty good		
28.	I think the main thing that got me to come back was the fact that I wasn't going anywhere with me job. I was doing asbestos removal and I got bored with that. It wasn't, it wasn't taking me anywhere. A friend of mine just recently passed away last year of cancer because of asbestos, and he told me to go back to school if I could to better myself, to get out of that occupation	Realization that his job was not going anywhere. His friend encouraged him to return to school	Positive Relationship -peers
29.	You feel a bit alienated unless you have a good self-esteem and you know people who are already going there. Also, it all depends on how you are towards your peers and teachers and other staff members there, too. The first two or three weeks is the time where they watch you to make sure if you're going to be a good student or a bad student or something in between	Student tends to feel threatened and judged. Need to feel he belongs	Negative Relationship -teachers
30.	Most people are still stereotyped that Natives are alcoholics and druggies and all that. There are people that are like that who are Native, but if a	As a Native, feels labeled as a drug addict or alcoholic	Negative Relationship -teachers

	person has to take just a handful of people to judge a whole society on then it's pretty narrow thinking. You have to judge people by the person, not by a community of people. And that's the way that teachers and other people that were, are in the school district are now		
31.	You've got to stand your ground as a Native student and if you don't do that right away then they'll try and run you down and I never let that happen to me	Feels defensive	Negative Relationship -teachers -peers
32.	You get a lot of looks. Just looking you over. Hardly anybody wants to be the brave one to start talking to you and that, so, I don't know. The first couple of weeks I was here I mainly kept to myself. As everybody started opening up, I could see it. It took me a while to open up	Felt threatened	Negative Relationship -peers
33.	If there's a lot of people around, I don't usually try to open up too much 'cause if you open up to much then it can be used against you	Fear of other's motives	Negative Relationship -peers
34.	It's already happened to me a couple of times. I've had to put my schoolwork ahead of my family. My mom was going through a rough	Conflicting demands of school and family	Importance of Family

	time at the hospital and that interfered with school and I had to miss a couple of days because of that, but now I have to start worrying about my education more		
35.	Sometimes they just want to give up because they find either the staff, the teachers can't take the time to explain to them exactly what to do. A lot of them are from the reserves and some of them can't even read or write and when they go to school and try to do it, they don't have enough background to do it and some of them find it pretty quick paced. Some of the students we had were pretty good and good marks and after a while they just couldn't keep up to it anymore. So they ended up withdrawing. They had a lot of problems, too. I guess it was just generalizing. It could be fast paced, it could be some discrimination, it could be a number of things	Feeling that the staff does not make enough time for them. Perhaps did not receive the right support	Negative Relationship -teachers
36.	They could turn around and set a class up for them, maybe in the morning or after lunch or something, to teach them about their ways. Help them stay in there. Help them combine the two worlds together	Need to strengthen Native Identification	Native Identification

37.	Having the elder come in and speak to the students about committing to both worlds. If they keep their spiritually and their beliefs with them and at the same time they learn how to deal in the different society	Need for support in reconciling two cultures	Native Identification
38.	We have a Native counsellor and she works pretty well, and a student might feel better talking to a Native counsellor rather than to a white counsellor	Native students may feel more comfortable with a Native counsellor	Native Identification

APPENDIX E
Thematic Abstractions from Participant Five's Experience

[Two Levels of Abstraction]

Meaning Units from Transcribed Interview	Paraphrases	Themes
1. The people. I didn't like the students especially. I didn't like any of the teachers. I always fought with the principal. To me he just seemed like a very prejudiced person toward Native people. He'd put people down. I would fight with him on a day to day basis. Like, I always had problems with my foot. On one side I had a bad toe. I'd always have, like, ingrown toenails and stuff, and he'd say, "Oh, well, you have to show me what's going on. What's doing this. Why aren't you in school for this and that?" And he just never believed me. He always said, "Indians are always lying, and all this. And he just thought that I came from a bad home and I didn't believe in that so I just went fine. Screw you. And I left. And that was it	School environment was not friendly. Felt that principal discriminated against Natives	Prejudice Negative Relationship -teachers
2. The teachers, I never paid any attention to them. I just did my work, went about my business and that was it. Because they all seemed the same to me	There was never a bond between her and high school teachers	Negative Relationship -teachers

3.	If it wasn't, if it wouldn't be like the white people seemed to be alienating different people around. Even with the Blacks, the Chinese, everybody who was, like, in their own groups	There was a sense of isolation between the different racial groups	Negative Relationship -peers
4.	Because they'd be asking questions, you'd raise your hand to answer them, sometimes they wouldn't even look your way	Feeling that teachers did not choose her because she was Native	Prejudice Negative Relationship -teachers
5.	I never really bothered anybody. Like, I was on my own kind of thing. I just did my own work, minded my own business. If people talked to me, fine, if they didn't, that's no big deal either	No real friends in high school	Negative Relationship -peers
6.	I'd have better marks than they did. They'd ask me questions about different things. Yeah. I'd help them with it and that was basically it	No close connections with other students	Negative Relationship -peers
7.	I had a hard time adjusting at the beginning, being with so many Native people. Because of the way I went through school, always with all these white people, Orientals, and Blacks, we were all together like this kind of thing (up to high school) and I wasn't used to so many Native people being around	Difficulty in adjusting to a predominantly Native student group	White Identification

8.	I was thinking about all that (stereotypes) for the first month. And there was people, some did drip out and I'd think, "Oh, yeah. They'll all be gone. This program's not going to work"	Felt that Native students in program would drop out	Negative Relationship -peers
9.	Drug and alcohol counselling to help the Natives. In the city. It would have to be in the city. I don't belong to a reserve. I'm not in a reserve. I'm Metis	Wants to work with Natives in a counselling role	Future Planning
1Ø.	I got tired of being a secretary. It gets very tedious. I was working for the Catholic churches and I got tired of it. Sitting there typing all day, answering phones, taking memos. Its gets pretty boring. And I figured I could do something better with myself. I wanted to come back to school	Realization that she could get a better job with an education	Future Planning
11.	She (mother) said, "Well, you can't lay around the house now. You have to find another job, go back to school, go for training, do something fulfilling." And then when I told her that I wanted to try out this program, she said, "Go ahead if you feel comfortable with it. Go ahead and try it"	Mother encouraged her to take charge of her life	Support

12.	Oh, everybody's in school. My dad is retired, my mom is a bus driver, my sister is going to Grant MacEwan in the fall, her first year, and my brother second year Grant MacEwan, and the youngest one in my family, he just graduated from high school	Family valued education Others are in different educational programs	Role Models -family
13.	The priest, Father _____, he was a great confidence builder. He said, "Yeah, go ahead. You're a smart person. You've done a lot of reading, and you're way past grade 12 level," he told me. And he told me to go ahead and try. Go for it	Her priest gave her encouragement to go back to school	Support -staff and environment
14.	It helps (to have Native role models). I think the students believe that they can succeed further on to what they actually think they can do. They see these people around them and they think, "Well, I could do that, too. Like, I see this person at this job. I don't have to settle for anything else"	Importance of Native Role Models	Role Models -Native
15.	Well, because of all of us being in school from, like, being at home, we all pretty much help each other. We're always helping each other do one thing or another. So	Her entire family values education. No compromising education for family	Support -family

there's no compromise, it's everybody helps everybody, kind of thing		
16. Peer pressure. Bad family life. They think, oh, you can do this some other time. Come party with us. Or different things, like, "Oh, we have to go to this pow wow, or whatever this weekend. That homework will have to wait"	Sees peer pressure, bad family life, and not placing enough value on education as reasons why some Natives do poorly in school	Negative Relationship -peers Unstable Family Dynamics
17. Yeah, They don't encourage you to stay in school. They, in fact, sort of discourage each other. Like, "Oh, well, you can always do this some other time" or "Let's skip today, and let's go here, and let's go do this" and stuff like that	Peers have a negative effect on school work	Negative Relationship -family
18. Because Native people like being in groups with their own king, and they readily follow along pretty well anything anybody does as long as they're having a good time and nobody's getting into trouble	Belief that Natives live for the moment and are generally more spontaneous	Negative Relationship -peers
19. Interaction groups. Like, they meet on a regular basis to help encourage each other. A counsellor, Native elders, other Native leaders in the societies. Like, if there's Native lawyers, or other Native teachers and stuff	Importance of support and Native role models	Support -staff and environment Role Models -Native

2Ø.	Everybody, all the Native people listen to the Native elders, like, even from the little kids, even if you see a drunk lying on the road, or a Native person that's drunk lying there, and an elder comes by to tell them something, they're going to get up and listen whether they feel like they have to or not because, out of respect for the elders	Elders are an important resource in working with Natives	Native Identification
21.	I think it would be a great asset for the students to learn about the cultures and it would help them go along with their culture better. Like, they wouldn't lose it. Like, some of them come from foster homes and stuff. Native students that come from there want to find out about their culture, what they feel they're missing out on. That would help them	Importance of teaching Native students about their heritage	Native Identification
22.	It would help some people, but a lot of Native people, they'd feel, um, I don't know, bothered on? (By home visits) Like, "This person's checking up on me. Why?" sort of thing, and a lot of them would be uncomfortable. That's exactly how it would be. They would feel judged, like, "We're not good enough for them. Why are they coming to see us," or something like that	Home visits to keep track of Native students who may need support would be viewed as a threat to families	Family Relationship with school

23.	It seems like they have more problems and I think it would be better if they have Native counsellors to talk to, like, to help them understand	Feels that Native students and counsellors would relate better to each	Native Identification
24.	They have all kinds of groups out nowadays. They have youth groups, dance groups, Sharing Circle groups. They have all kinds of groups. I think a lot of students do OK and that helps them get through school	There is a need for Native support groups for students	Positive Relationship -peers -teachers
25.	In my brother's school it's great. Like, there at St. Joe's, I go there to do different things for him when he needs help because he sits in a wheel chair, and the Native population at the school is just unreal there. Must be, oh, I'd say there's at least 50-60 of them. There's quite a few there. And they all seem pretty determined and they all interact with everybody else. It's not most segregation, like, you're here because you're Native, you're here because you're black. And you stay here because you're whatever, Oriental. They don't do that. They're all together. They have a really good atmosphere. And they do have, I believe, a Native teacher there, and Native	The atmosphere in the school is one of acceptance. There is a positive relationship between students and between students and staff. Native staff members add to the positive environment	Positive Relationship -peers -teachers

counsellors, and they all
try and help.

APPENDIX F
Synthesis of Clusters Pertinent to all Participants

1. All participants clearly identified themselves as being Native. A distinction between themselves and members of the dominant culture seems to have been well developed by the later years of elementary school. In some instances the Native students told of how they grouped with other Native children in school in order to gain a sense of belonging and to avoid being judged by other students. In other instances, they recalled being categorized by others as acting "white" or acting "Indian." A great deal of anxiety was caused when others were called names like "wagon burner." All participants also recommended that Native students be given the opportunity to interact with Native elders and teachers. They indicated that Native students need to be able to reconcile Native and dominant culture views in order to be successful.

2. Four of the five participants stated that they had experienced some sort of unstable family dynamics. Situations such as change in primary care giver, alcoholism of parents or care-giver, and frequent moves to different schools and communities were described. The fifth participant said that she felt that bad family life was one factor that influences Native students to drop out of school.

3. All participants indicated that they had experienced peer relationships that had hindered their ability to do well in school. In this study, the term "negative peer relationships" includes peer pressure from friends to engage in behavior detrimental to school success and relationships with other, non-Native, students that undermined Native student self-concept and/or impacted negatively on their ability to learn.

4. Each student indicated that his/her decision to quit school had been influenced to some extent by some teachers who had shown prejudicial behavior toward Native students. Such behavior included ignoring Native students, working with Native students only when white students had been already helped, "writing off" Natives as failures, having little or no respect for and criticizing Native values or cultural expression, discussing Native students and their families and commenting on suspected home problems, singling out students and embarrassing them to keep them in line, and by telling Native students that since they were all liars, they would have to show physical proof to explain illness.

5. Positive relationships with peers seems to have had a strong influence on whether or not Native students return to or remain in school. Encouragement to return to school or remain in school by peers seems to have a lot of weight. As well, the participants noted that in their present situation, they feel that the other Native students give them the support and encouragement they need to continue when the going gets rough. A common theme mentioned by the participants is that they feel more comfortable learning in an environment in which there are other Native students. Participants mentioned that they felt comfortable discussing topics specific to Natives and Native cultural activities without fear of being ridiculed.

6. Positive relationships with teachers and other school staff members also seems to have had a strong influence on whether Native students stay in school. Participants related specific incidents in which former and present teachers had advocated for them. Participants who felt that their teachers cared for them and had their interests in mind indicated that they were encouraged to work hard and be successful.

7. All participants lamented the lack of Native role models for Native students. They indicated that it has been difficult for them to aspire to many careers and occupations because they have little or no experience to base expectations on. One participant stated that Native students "self-destruct" when faced with the option of striking off in an unfamiliar direction. All participants recommended having at least some Native teachers for Native students and giving Native students the opportunity to meet Native adults who have succeeded in careers usually held by members of the dominant culture.

8. All of the participants indicated that family support had been an important factor in keeping them in school. Support usually took the form of encouragement but also included family members helping students to clarify school goals and determine appropriate methods of achieving those goals.

9. Each participant in this study has indicated that the decision to remain in school has been made with some future goal in mind. While some goals are very specific, such as getting into a particular program at N.A.I.T., others are more general. Participants indicated that they see life without an education as a dead end street. They view having an education as a means to having a better life in the future for themselves and their families. The participants who have children both stated that they have higher

aspirations for their children than they see possible without an education.

APPENDIX G

Interview Guide - Questions

1. When were you born? (month, year)

2. Where were you born?

3. Where did you first go to school? (Elementary)

4. a. Did you remain at the same school for all of grades one to six?
   b. If not, why did you switch schools?

5. Where did you go to school for junior high and high school?

6. a. Did you remain at the same junior and senior high school?
   b. If not, why did you switch schools?

7. a. During your years at school, what were your feelings about having to go?
   b. Did your feelings about school change as you grew older? If so, how/why did they change?

8. a. Are you currently attending school? (Continuous or returning to)
   b. What kind of program are you enrolled in?

9. Who are/were the key people who influence/d your decision to remain in or go back to school?

_____ parents	_____ friends
_____ grandparents	_____ siblings
_____ teachers	_____ social worker
_____ principal	_____ parish priest
_____ counsellor	_____ other

OR

Who are/were the key people who influence/d your decision to quit school?

10. What critical events have affected your decision as to whether or
not you will/would remain in school?

11. If returning to school, what prompted you to return?
(Persons/events)

12. What are your perceptions of what it is like to be a native student
in a public school?

13. Do school expectations and demands ever conflict with personal and
family concerns?

14. What do you see as the reason/reasons why many native students do
not wish to remain in school?

15. What could be done to make native students more likely to remain
in school?

APPENDIX H

Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Native students in a school system decide whether or not they will remain in school.

It is hoped that this information about Native students' experiences in schools will be useful in helping educators modify their teaching practices to accommodate the need of future Native students.

The researcher is a graduate student in the faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. She is currently completing the Counselling Psychology program while on leave from Edmonton Public Schools.

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I, , consent to being a participant in this study about how native students determine whether or not they will remain in an educational system which is made up predominantly of non-native individuals. I understand that my participation in this research is completely voluntary and that I may decide freely to withdraw at any point in the research process.

I further understand that my participation will be confidential. Any names or other identifying information will be changed in the transcript process. A pen name may be substituted for my name. Audiotapes of the interview will be accessible only to the researcher and supervisor and will be destroyed upon completion of this study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX I (Verbal Presentation)

Introductory Explanations to Participants

My name is Dorothy Makinen and I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta. I am a teacher and am currently on leave from Edmonton Public Schools while studying Counselling Psychology.

Purpose of the Study:

I am doing this study to determine what factors influence Native students in their decision on whether or not to remain in school.

Benefits to Participants:

It is hoped that by identifying themes describing why Native students choose to remain in or leave school, educators can be made more aware of concerns unique to these students and can be encouraged to modify their teaching practices to accommodate student needs.

Rights of Participants:

Information obtained from interviews with participants will be audiotaped. These audiotapes will be accessible only to me, the researcher, and my supervisor and will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and the subject may decide freely to withdraw at any point in the research process.